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# ENGLAND AND THE ENGLISH

## IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

VOL. II.

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# ENGLAND AND THE ENGLISH

## IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Chapters in the Social History of the Times

BY

WILLIAM CONNOR SYDNEY

'The Life of Man in England: what men did, thought, suffered, enjoyed; the form, especially the spirit of their terrestrial existence; its outward environment; its inward principle; how and what it was; whence it was; whence it proceeded; whither it was tending'

CARLYLE

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# CONTENTS

OF

# THE SECOND VOLUME.

PAGE

## CHAPTER XI.

ROADS AND TRAVELLING.

Deplorable condition of the roads both in town and country—Evidence of various authorities cited—Turnpike Acts—Opposition to the erection of turnpikes—Young's experiences on his southern tour—Stage-coaches and those who travelled by them—Flying coaches—Dangers and inconveniences of stage-coach travelling—Footpads and highwaymen—Inns and alehouses—The post—Establishment of the mail-coach system . . . . . 1

## CHAPTER XII.

FAVOURITE HEALTH RESORTS.

The rise of the spas—Metropolitan spas—Hampstead Wells—Islington spa—The new Tunbridge Wells—Sadler's Wells—The provincial spas—Epsom—Tunbridge Wells—The baths of Bath—Beau Nash and the world he lived in—The Bristol hot-wells—Malvern, Cheltenham, Buxton, Harrogate, and Scarborough—The seaward movement—Brighthelmstone—The south coast—The Isle of Thanet—Cromer—The Lake district . . . . . 44

## CHAPTER XIII.

EDUCATION.

Retrograde condition of education in the last century—'The Grand Tour'—Yorkshire schools—Course of female instruction—Mrs.

PAGE

Trimmer's schools—State of the English universities—Remissness of discipline—Facility of graduation—Social life at Oxford and Cambridge . . . . . 86

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE LITERARY WORLD.

The Augustan era of English literature—Its rise and wane—Evil consequences of Government patronage of authors—Miseries of literary life in London under the first Georges—Samuel Boyse—Dancing attendance upon the great—Private patronage—Publishing by subscription—Fulsome dedications—Laureate odes—Magazines and reviews—Circulating libraries and reading societies—Goldsmith's castigation of Chinese tales and English tours—Eighteenth-century novels—Pamphlets—The Fourth Estate—Sketch of its history—Dr. Johnson as a reporter—Advertisements—The provincial press—Anonymity and *noms de guerre* . . . . . 113

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE POLITICAL WORLD.

Bitterness of party spirit—Intensity of political feeling and its causes—Political societies—Elections and electioneering tactics—Hogarth's Election series—The case of New Shoreham—William Wilberforce and the Hull freemen—The Westminster election of 1784—Bribery and corruption in high places—Cowper and the visit of the candidate—Fierceness of the electoral contests for Leicester, Middlesex, and Nottingham in the eighteenth century . . . . 157

## CHAPTER XVI.

### KING MOB.

Fiedling's remarks on the character of the English rabble—Hatred of foreigners—Mob treatment of French visitors to the capital—Review of memorable London riots—Dr. Sacheverel—The Spitalfields weavers—'Wilkes and Liberty'—The Gordon riots of 1780—Testimony of various eye-witnesses adduced—Popular demonstrations on important events—Acquittal of Admiral Keppel—Aristocratic rioters . . . . . 192

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE LIFE OF THE PROVINCES.

PAGE

Isolation of provincial society—Boorish manners of the peasantry—The squire—The country parson as he was—The rural Sunday—Furniture of country houses—Domestic manners—Food—Toasting—Recreations—The turf—Sports of the lower orders—State of provincial towns—Social condition of their inhabitants—Archaic customs—Bury Fair—Marriage and funeral ceremonies—Local punishments—The tumbril, cucking-stool, and 'Drunkard's Cloak'—The brank, or 'Gossip's Bridle'—The whipping post—A country clergyman's book of accounts—Defoe's tour through England—Arthur Young's peregrinations . . . . . 217

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE CRIMINAL CODE.

Barbarous nature of the criminal code—Writings of Romilly and Madan upon it—Summary of the penal enactments then in force—Legislative apathy in the reform of the criminal code—Trading justices—Public executions and their attendant evils—Tyburn, and the way there—Popular relish for hangings—Public dissection of malefactors—Suspension in chains—Abolition of the Tyburn procession—Dr. Johnson's opinion touching its effects—Burning for *petit treason*—*Peine forte et dure*—The pillory and its abuses—The prisons—Incarceration for debt—John Howard and the prison world of England—The Hulks system—Transportation of convicts to New South Wales . . . . . 266

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

State of religion in England under Queen Anne—Under the first Georges—The national Church—Social condition of the Anglican clergy—Pluralities—Non-residence, episcopal and clerical—The Presbytery and the Hierarchy—Ordination—The Methodist revival—Church services—Church abuses—The congregation in church—The parish clerk—Sermons—Epitaphs—Bells—State of English Protestant nonconformity—The Evangelical revival and its results. 322

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE FLEET CHAPLAINS AND THE FLEET WEDDINGS.

PAGE

History of the Fleet registers—Origin of the Fleet marriages—The shameful practices of parsons and plyers—Description of the ceremony attendant upon a Fleet wedding—Extracts from the registers—Other localities besides the Fleet prison used for purposes of clandestine matrimony—Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act—Passing of the Act—Evasion of its provisions—Opposition—Sir William Blackstone's comments on the measure—Attempts at its repeal—Its defect—Fledborough and Gretna Green—Concluding observations on the eighteenth century . . . . . 378

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## CHAPTER XI.

### ROADS AND TRAVELLING.

Deplorable condition of the roads both in town and country—Evidence of various authorities cited—Turnpike Acts—Opposition to the erection of turnpikes—Young's experiences on his southern tour—Stage-coaches and those who travelled by them—Flying coaches—Dangers and inconveniences of stage-coach travelling—Footpads and highwaymen—Inns and alehouses—The post—Establishment of the mail-coach system.

To the civilisation of a nation nothing is so absolutely essential as a system of good roads. It is that which constitutes the foundation of its prosperity and greatness. Destitute of such a system, the energies and resources of a country must inevitably lie in almost their sum total unknown, untouched, and altogether useless. The same purpose that is served by the veins and arteries in the promotion of the circulation of the social body is served by roads in the promotion of the circulation of the body politic; consequently where they do not exist, no community can, strictly speaking, be said to exist. The people possess nothing in common, nor are they a people in anything except the name. Neither commerce nor any kind of intercourse fuses them together into one commonwealth. In a land devoid of a system of roads, the people would of necessity

be savages. 'Of all inventions, the alphabet and the printing press alone excepted, those inventions which abridge distance have done most for the civilisation of our species. Every improvement of the means of locomotion benefits mankind morally and intellectually as well as materially.' So it does, and the point is too evident to require it to be enlarged upon. Places remote from each other are virtually brought near; there is a diffusion of intelligence and an impetus given to commerce, and by all these advantages the condition of the people is most powerfully affected. It is to be regretted, however, that the generality of English people in the last century could never be prevailed upon to see the force of this. Infinitely better for them would it have been if they had. We have already seen that the principal thoroughfares of the capital at the accession of George III. were in a condition very far removed from that in which they should have been, and that matters did not begin to mend in this respect until the century was drawing to a close. If the art of paving the streets was but very imperfectly understood, the science of road-making was even less so; and for years after the establishment of the mail-coach system, more than one half of the roads by which the greater part of England was intersected were such as to be scarcely deserving of the name.

Down to the commencement of the eighteenth century, the duty of repairing the highways had been one that had devolved either upon the parishes which lay adjacent to them or upon those through which they ran. This burden was removed in 1700. During the reigns of William III. and Queen Anne, several Turnpike Acts were passed, but for all the good they did, they might just as well have never been passed. Strange as it may seem, even the most eminent engineers of the age continued to regard the art of constructing roads as altogether unworthy of their attention, until their minds were disabused of so inveterate an idea, once and for all, by the famous Smeaton, who to their surprise dared in 1768 to construct a road across the valley of the river Trent between Markham and Newark. How people managed to move about, at least with any ease, in the age which immediately preceded the construction of macada-

mised roads, it is really difficult to conceive. The usual way in which goods were conveyed from one place to another was either by waggons or by packhorses. The nobility travelled in their private carriages, the gentry on horseback, women on the side-saddle, and sometimes upon pillions, seated behind the servants.

In the year of the accession of Queen Anne to the throne of England, Charles III. of Spain decided to visit these shores. After repeated delays the King and his suite succeeded in reaching Portsmouth, and thence contrived to get as far as Petworth, in Sussex, where they awaited the coming of Prince George of Denmark from Windsor Castle. Their experiences on the road between Portsmouth and Petworth are thus related in the words of one of the attendants :—

> We set out at six in the morning by torchlight to go to Petworth and did not get out of the coaches (save only when we were overturned or stuck fast in the mire) till we arrived at our journey's end. 'Twas a hard service for the Prince to sit fourteen hours in the coach that day without eating anything, and passing through the worst ways I ever saw in my life. We were thrown but once, indeed, in going, but our coach (which was the leading one) and his Highness's body coach would have suffered very much if the nimble boors of Sussex had not frequently poised it or supported it with their shoulders from Godalming almost to Petworth ; and the nearer we approached the Duke of Somerset's house the more inaccessible it seemed to be. The last nine miles of the way cost us six hours to conquer them ; and indeed we had never done it if our good master had not several times lent us a pair of horses out of his own coaching, whereby we were enabled to trace out the road for him.

From Windsor to Petworth, the length of way was only forty miles, but fourteen hours were consumed in traversing it, while almost every stage was signalised by the overturn of a carriage or its temporary swamping in the mire. Even the royal chariot would have fared no better than the rest had it not been for the relays of peasants who poised and kept it erect by strength of arm, and shouldered it forward the last nine miles, in which tedious operation six good hours were consumed.[1] This was a specimen of travelling in 1703 along the Sussex roads, and is characteristic of what our slow-going, long-suffering forefathers endured more or less, with the patience of

[1] *Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27, 828.

a very Job, even at a short distance from the capital, till the closing years of the century. The Turnpike Act of the 3rd George I. c. 4 recited that the roads about Islington, Highgate, &c., were very ruinous and almost impassable for the space of five months in the year. So late as 1756 a shrewd, sharp-witted Scotch lady, Mrs. Calderwood, says in one of her letters descriptive of a tour to London, that the road from Barnet to Kensington Green was 'a very lonely and wild' one, 'and nothing like the repair would one expect so near a great town,'[1] while in traversing the eight miles which lay between London and Mitcham, she noted that they had 'a good part of the road pretty wild; what they call downs and we call moor.'[2] A country gentleman when travelling alone at this time usually adopted the plan called 'riding post'—that is to say, he hired at each stage for the sum of eightpence two horses, with a post-boy, who carried the portmanteau behind him, and rode back with the horses when fresh ones were required. Pillions were the usual modes of conveyance for women among farmers and gentry.

In the month of February 1709 the celebrated topographer of Leeds, Ralph Thoresby, of pious memory, who had been sojourning in London, started homewards in company with a dear friend, an alderman, and some Hull gentlemen. On the third day after leaving town, the worthy Thoresby notes in his 'Diary' that he

> found the roads very bad in some places, the ice being broke by the coaches that it bore not, and rougher than a ploughed field in others, yet hard as iron, that it battered the horses' feet; the servant's was downright lame, that when we baited he was sent before to make the best he could of the way. . . . The ice breaking, we were often forced to alight, and had none to assist in any matter but the alderman himself, who acted the part of a most kind friend, but had more trouble than I was pleased with, yet could not avoid; but it pleased God to bring us in safety and good time to Carlton by Newark, where we lodged.

On the following day, Thoresby records that he found the roads dangerous as well as troublesome at the Eel-pie-house, by Tuxford, and afterwards tedious by snows lately fallen in Yorkshire. The day afterwards the road was

[1] *Letters and Journals*, ed. Ferguson, pp. 8, 9. [2] *Ibid.* p. 40.

full of snow, and, which was worse, upon a continued ice almost, the melted snow being frozen again, that made it dangerous and very troublesome; so that I was more fatigued with this last twenty miles than all the journey besides. My horse slipped dangerously often, and once fell quite down (as I was leading him into Wentbrigg), but, blessed be God! we arrived safe at our desired habitations betwixt two and three, and found our families well.[1]

Travellers in that age consulted in place of 'Bradshaw,' Ogilby's 'Britannia Depicta, or Correct Coppy of Mr. Ogilby's Actual Survey of all y^e^ Direct & Principal Cross Roads in England and Wales, very neatly executed,' but to what extent the perusal of such works benefited them may be questioned. 'Cursed roads, as all Cheshire,' says Mrs. Bradshaw, of Gosworth Hall, near Congleton, in that county, writing in August 1727.[2] Lord Hervey, writing under date of June 18, 1743, from Ickworth Park to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu :—

> I find the farther one goes from the capital, the more tedious the miles grow and the more rough and disagreeable the way. I know of no turnpikes to mend them; medicine pretends to be such, but doctors who have the management of it, like the commissioners for most other turnpikes, seldom execute what they undertake; they only put the toll of the poor cheated passenger in their pockets, and leave every jolt as bad as they find it, if not worse.[3]

With the roads in this deplorable condition, communication and intercourse were almost at a standstill. A journey any little distance from home was a serious undertaking, so serious, indeed, that it often meant the inditing of a last will and testament before it was undertaken. Bad as the roads were in the summer-time when clouds of dust blinded the traveller in every direction, infinitely worse were they at such times as the waters were out or after a heavy fall of rain, when the chances were that wayfarers, after crawling along at a pace of two or three miles an hour in constant fear of sticking fast in a quagmire, had to brave the impetuous force of the current of some river that had overflowed its banks, the strong barely escaping with their lives, the weak often perishing in the stream. The complaints lodged against the roads after touring and the

[1] *Diary*, ed. Hunter, ii. 43–4.
[2] *Howard Corresp.* ed. Croker, i. p. 270.
[3] *Lord Hervey's Memoirs*, ed. Croker, i. lvii.

writing of accounts of touring became fashionable in England were legion, and it must be confessed that they were not lodged without reason. Even the home counties, Essex, Kent, Sussex, and Surrey, partook largely of the nature of bogs. Daniel Defoe, in a series of letters published in 1724, descriptive of his 'Tour through Great Britain,' which he undertook in April 1722, is very outspoken with reference to the roads he traversed in the county of Sussex.

> Sometimes (he wrote) I have seen one tree on a carriage which they call here a tug, drawn by two and twenty oxen, and even then, this carried so little a way, and then thrown down and left for other tugs to take up and carry on, that sometimes it is two or three years before it gets to Chatham; for if once the rains come in, it stirs no more that year, and sometimes a whole summer is not dry enough to make the roads passable.[1]

In the same letter he says:—

> Going to church at a country village not far from Lewes, I saw an ancient lady—and a lady of very good quality I assure you—drawn to church in her coach with six oxen; nor was it done in frolic or humour, but mere necessity, the way being so stiff and deep that no horses could go in it.[2]

Jonas Hanway, the philanthropist, has left on record that he found the road lying between Godalming and Petersfield in August 1755 a dreary waste, and states that he pursued his journey from Epsom along a cross ugly road of clay, which seemed to be passable only in dry weather.[3] In 1727 George II. and Queen Caroline, in endeavouring to reach St. James's Palace from Kew, were obliged to pass the whole night on the road, and when between Hammersmith and Fulham, owing to the upsetting of their coach, the royal pair were thrown out bodily into the road. So late as 1736 Lord Hervey complains that 'the road between the court suburb of Kensington and Piccadilly is grown so infamously bad that we live here in the same solitude as we would do if cast on a rock in the middle of the ocean, and all the Londoners tell us that there is between them and us an impassable gulf of mud.'[4] Dr. Cleland, in his 'Statistical Account of Glasgow,' quotes

[1] Defoe, *Tour*, i. 59.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 60.
[3] *Journal of Eight Days' Journey*, Letter lxii.
[4] *Memoirs.*

an extract from the scrapbook of a gentleman named Bannatyne, who states that he was told by two gentlemen of his acquaintance, named Thomson and Glassford, that when in 1739 they journeyed from Glasgow to London on horseback, no turnpike road greeted their eyes till they came to Grantham, which lies within 110 miles of London. Up to that point they travelled on a narrow causeway, with an unmade soft road each side of it. They met from time to time strings of packhorses, from thirty to forty in a gang, the mode by which goods seemed to be transported from one part of the country to another. The leading horse of the gang carried a bell to give warning to travellers coming in an opposite direction; and when the two wayfarers met these trains of horses, with their packs across their backs, the causeway not affording room, they were obliged to make way for them and plunge into the road, out of which they sometimes found it difficult to get back again upon the causeway.

Acts of Parliament followed each other in quick succession, so that the immediate charge of maintaining them was levied upon travellers, the necessary funds being raised by means of tolls. This led to the erection of numerous barriers consisting of either poles or bars, swung on pivots one way or the other, as the tolls were paid. What followed? The roads continued to be almost as bad as ever. The money levied was more than double the amount of that which was necessary for executing the work, which was always done in a slovenly manner, and sometimes not even performed at all. It was very mortifying to the country gentlemen to be compelled to contribute towards the repair of roads which continued to be as bad, if not worse, than they had been before the turnpike system had been adopted. Complaints reached the legislative assembly from all quarters. They at length assumed book form. At two meetings of the Royal Society, in the winter of 1736–7, Robert Phillips read an able 'Dissertation concerning the present state of the high roads of England, especially of those near London;' that was afterwards embodied in a volume, in which he showed that the methods employed in mending the turnpike

roads about London, for more than twenty years past, had generally proved ineffectual. The Tyburn road comes in for the largest share of abuse, it being well known by travellers, says Phillips, that

> in the Summer tho' the Road be level and smooth, yet they are suffocated and smother'd with Dust; and towards the Winter, between wet and dry, there are deep Ruts full of Water with hard dry Ridges, which make it difficult for Passengers to cross by one another without overturning; and in the winter they are all Mud, which rises, spues, and squeezes into the Ditches; so that the Ditches and Roads are full of Mud and Dirt all alike, and all of a level.[1]

Demagogues now began to travel about the country, pointing their morals and adorning their tales by assuring their hearers that the erection of turnpikes was part of a covert design on the part of the Government to enslave the people and to deprive them of their liberty. In many parts of the country there was a decided refusal to pay toll, and during the months of July and August 1749 organised bands of rioters, similar to those organised by the Rechabites of our own times, demolished all the turnpike gates on the roads leading to and from Bristol, repeating their experiment as fast as the gates were re-erected. The contagion spread, and it was found necessary to quarter troops in many districts, to repress the disturbances.

The passing of a general Turnpike Act in the year 1755, which rendered the construction of turnpikes compulsory all over the country, was one of the most important events in the history of the century. Turnpikes thus became for many years the principal mode of supporting the heavy expenses incurred in the repair of the roads, and contributed in no inconsiderable degree towards the gradual internal improvement of England. When turnpikes were introduced, one Chapple, a political economist of the day, predicted that two of the innumerable consequences which would inevitably arise from turnpike roads would be 'a rise in the price of oats,' and a 'reacting fall in the price of wheat.'[2] It might very reasonably be sup-

[1] *Dissertation*, p. 45. [2] Cottle's *Malvern Hills, &c.* i. 91.

posed that the effects of this measure would have been a most marked improvement in the state of the roads. Far from it. In 1767, and the five years which followed, Arthur Young, an eminent Suffolk agriculturist, undertook several tours through England with the object of ascertaining the principles of agricultural science, the state of the manufactures, the methods employed in cultivating the soil, the wages of labour, the prices of food, and the general condition of the peasantry. A record of the first of these tours was published anonymously by him in a series of letters in 1767, and contains much interesting information relative to the state of the turnpike roads in the reign of George III. Setting out from the little town of Wells in Norfolk, Young traversed the counties of Suffolk, Essex, Bucks, Oxon, Gloucester, Monmouth, Glamorgan, Somerset, Wilts, and Hants—roughly speaking, a distance of 600 miles. Numerous are the anathemas which this shrewd observer hurls at the highways over which he and his steed were obliged to journey.

I chiefly travelled (he writes in one of the letters) upon turnpikes, of all which, that from Salisbury to four miles the other side of Romsey towards Winchester, is without exception the finest I ever saw. The trustees highly deserve all the praise that can be given by everyone who travels it.

With this road Young considered that 'the great one to Barnet' ought to be 'ranked.' After that 'the Kentish one,' succeeded by those 'to Chelmsford and Uxbridge' respectively. Next he ranks 'the eighteen miles of finished road from Cowbridge in Glamorganshire to six miles this side of Cardiff.'

As to all the rest (he continues), it is a prostitution of language to call them turnpikes; I rank them nearly in the same class with the dark lanes from Billericay to Tilbury Fort. Among the bad ones, however, some parts of the road from Telsford to Gloucester are much better than the unmended parts from Gloucester to the good road on this side of Cardiff. The latter is all terrible; but then it is a great extenuation to observe that they have been at work but two years. Much more to be condemned is the execrable muddy road from Bury to Sudbury in Suffolk, in which I was forced to move as slow as in any unmended lane in Wales. For ponds of liquid dirt, and a scattering of loose flints just sufficient

to lame every horse that moves near them, with the addition of cutting vile grips across the road, under pretence of letting water off, but without the effect, all together render at least twelve of these sixteen miles as infamous a turnpike as ever was travelled.

Elsewhere Young states that the road leading from Chelmsford to Hedingham in Essex was 'something on the same style,' while

as to Norfolk and her natural roads, the boast of the inhabitants, who repeat with vanity the saying of Charles II., all that I have to remark is that I know not one mile of excellent road in the whole county. Bad, however, as all natural roads are, part of the Norfolk ones, it must be allowed, exceed the Suffolk turnpike.

The reader will have observed that when Young is desirous of painting the turnpike roads in their blackest colours, he compares them with 'the dark lanes leading from Billericay in Essex to Tilbury Fort.' A description of this 'highway' occupies best part of his second letter, and it may be fairly assumed that the recollection of his experiences upon it had entered his soul when he penned the subjoined paragraph in the parlour of the King's Head Inn, Tilbury, on June 14, 1767 :—

'Of all the cursed roads that ever disgraced this kingdom in the very ages of barbarism, none ever equalled that from Billericay to the King's Head at Tilbury. It is for near 12 miles so narrow that a mouse cannot pass by any carriage. I saw a fellow creep under his waggon to assist me to lift, if possible, my chaise over a hedge. The ruts are of an incredible depth, and a pavement of diamonds might as well be fought for as a quarter. The trees everywhere overgrow the road, so that it is totally impervious to the sun except at a few places. And to add to all the infamous circumstances which concur to plague a traveller, I must not forget the eternally meeting with chalk waggons, themselves frequently stuck fast till a collection of them are in the same situation, and twenty or thirty horses may be tacked to each to draw them out one by one. After this description will you?—can you?—believe me, when I tell you that a turnpike was much solicited by some gentleman to lead from Chelmsford to the ferry at Tilbury Fort, but opposed by the Bruins of this country, whose horses are torn in pieces with bringing chalk through those vile roads.[1]

In conclusion the writer expresses his conviction that the kingdom could hardly produce another 'such instance of detestable stupidity.' Writing from one of the numerous inns

[1] *Six Weeks' Tour*, pp. 72, 73.

in the town of Chelmsford, on July 23, 1767, Young launches a parting bolt at the shortcomings of the 'Bruins' of the county of Essex.

I found upon a journey I took from this place to Bury (he adds in a postscript) that the road to Hedingham is excessive bad, and from Sudbury to within two miles of Bury still worse. Their method of mending in the last mentioned road I found excessively absurd, for in nine parts out of ten of it, the sides are higher than the middle, and the gravel they bring in is nothing more but a yellow loam with a few stones in it, through which the wheels of a light chaise cut as easily as in sand, with the addition of such floods of watery mud as render the road, on the whole, inferior to nothing but an unmended Welsh lane.

But is not Arthur Young, it may be inquired, pressing with undue severity upon the roads of the county of Essex? By no means. His strictures upon the roads of other counties are equally severe. His observations, for instance, in Letter 4, on the state of the road extending 'from Wycomb up to Stoke,' in the county of Buckingham, are as follows :—

The turnpike road declined greatly, insomuch that I could scarcely believe myself in one, for near Telford they mend entirely of stone dug out of the hills, which are like quarries, and are in large flakes, so that in those places which are just mended, the horse hobbles over them as if afraid of breaking his legs.[1]

Take again the description of the road from Telford to Oxford, contained in the same letters :—

Called by a vile prostitution of language a turnpike, but christened, I apprehend, by people who do not know what a road is, it is all of chalk stone, of which everywhere loose ones are rolling about to lame horses. It is full of holes, and the ruts very deep; and withal so narrow, that I with great difficulty got my chair out of the way of the Witney waggons and various machines which are perpetually passing. The tolls are very dear and vilely unreasonable considering the badness of the roads.[2]

In another place Young informs his friend that the road from Witney to North Leach was 'the worst turnpike he ever travelled in;' and 'so bad that it is a scandal to the country.' He begins his fifth letter by saying that he was

[1] *Six Weeks' Tour*, p. 88. [2] *Ibid.* p. 90.

infinitely surprised to find the same stony, hard, rough, and cursed roads, miscalled turnpikes, all the way from Gloucester to Newnham, which is twelve miles; it is all a narrow lane, and most infamously stony; it is the same stone as the other side of the Severn, but much harder, and consequently more jolting and cutting to the horses' way, nor is it so much as level, but ruts all the way.

From Newnham to Chepstow the road continued 'excessively stony,' for the principal reason that it was 'made in the same vile manner as that from Gloucester.' Young found matters assumed a form very little better when he got into the Principality.

My dear Sir (runs one portion of his letter), what am I to say of the roads in this country? The turnpikes, as they have the assurance to call them, and the hardiness to make one pay for! From Chepstow to the half-way house between Newport and Cardiff, they continue mere rocky lanes, full of hugeous stones as big as one's horse, and abominable holes. The first six miles from Newport, they were so detestable, without either direction posts or milestones, that I could not well persuade myself I was on the turnpike, but had mistook the road; and, therefore, asked everyone I met, who answered me to my astonishment, '*Ya-as*!' Whatever business carries you into this country, avoid it; at least till they have good roads.

It does not appear that Young visited North Wales, but he managed to get into Lancashire and other northern counties, as he furnishes a graphic description of the state of the turnpike road between Wigan and Preston, in the year of grace 1770.

I know not (he says), in the whole range of language, terms sufficiently expressive to describe this infernal highway. Let me most seriously caution all travellers who may accidentally propose to travel this terrible country to avoid it as they would the devil, for a thousand to one but they break their necks or their limbs by overthrows or breakings down. They will here meet with ruts, which I actually measured, four feet deep, and floating with mud only from a wet summer. What must it therefore be in winter? The only mending it receives in places is the tumbling in some loose stones, which serve no other purpose but jolting a carriage in the most intolerable manner. These are not merely opinions but facts, for I actually passed three carts broken down in these eighteen miles of execrable memory.[1]

A few more excerpts from Young's works and then we must leave him. The road to Wakefield he calls 'indifferent;' that

[1] *Tour through North of England*, iv. 430, 431.

leading through the town of Wakefield 'so bad that it ought to be indicted;'[1] that to Castle Howard 'infamous,' and he adds, 'I was near being swallowed up in a slough'; that from Newton to Stokesley in Cleveland, 'cross and extremely bad;' that going down into Cleveland itself, 'beyond all description terrible;' a portion of the great North road from Richmond to Darlington by Croft Bridge, 'execrably broke into holes, like an old pavement, sufficient to dislocate one's bones;' to Morpeth, 'a pavement, a mile or two out of Newcastle, which is tolerable, all the rest vile.'[2] From Wigan to Warrington the turnpike was

a paved road and most infamously bad. Any person would imagine the people of the country had made it with a view to immediate destruction, for the breadth is only sufficient for one carriage, consequently it is cut at once into ruts, and you will easily conceive what a break-down dislocating road ruts cut through a pavement must be. . . . Tolls had better be doubled, and even quadrupled, than suffer such a nuisance to remain.[3]

From Liverpool to Altringham: 'If possible, this execrable road is worse than that from Preston. It is a heavy land, which cuts into such prodigious ruts, that a carriage moves with great danger.' Of the turnpike from Dunholm to Knutsford, he records: 'It is impossible to describe these infernal roads in terms adequate to their deserts: part of these six miles, I think, are worse than any of the preceding.' Of the turnpike between Holmes Chapel and Newcastle, he says, 'Let me persuade all travellers to avoid this terrible country, which must either dislocate their bones with broken pavements or fling them in muddy sand.'[4] A passage in a letter from Gray to Mason, dated Darlington, August 26, 1769, is partly confirmatory of Young's strictures: 'The road to Auckland is so dangerous,' he says, 'that the chaise owner does not think of sending any that way unless the season changes to a long drought;'[5] while Gibbon, the Roman historian, writing from St. James's Street to Lord Sheffield in 1793, says that 'he was almost killed between Sheffield Place and East Grinstead, by hard, frozen, long and

[1] *Tour through North of England*, iv. 424.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 429. [3] *Ibid.* pp. 431, 432. [4] *Ibid.* p. 433.
[5] *Letters*, ed. Mitford, p. 43.

cross ruts, that would disgrace the approach to an Indian wigwam.'

Nor is it to be supposed that the roads in the south-western counties of England were any the better. The road lying between the villages of Deane and Steventon in the county of Hants, the benefices of which were long held by the Rev. G. Austen, father of the illustrious novelist of that name, is described by her biographer as exhibiting in 1771 the appearance of 'a mere cart track, so cut up by deep ruts as to be impassable for a light carriage.'[1] Between the years 1760 and 1764 inclusive, upwards of four hundred and fifty Acts of Parliament were passed in order to effect the formation of new, and the repair or alteration of the condition of old, highways throughout the country; but notwithstanding all this, they yet continued to be narrow, darkened with trees, and intersected with ruts and miry swamps, endangering the lives and property of all who had occasion to make use of them. It might naturally be supposed that any proposals to remedy such an abominable state of affairs would have been hailed with feelings of joy and gratitude on the part of those who were to profit by them; but, according to contemporaneous accounts, the country 'Bruins' not only persistently opposed with the most stubborn obstinacy imaginable each and every measure directed to that end, but in many cases flatly refused to travel by the roads after they had been constructed.

Having seen the state of the public roads in the last century, let us next see how the people travelled on them, and what the rates were at which they ordinarily proceeded.

It must be borne in mind that when the eighteenth century dawned the stage-coach system in England had not emerged from that opposition which its establishment had engendered in the second half of the previous century. Objectors made use of arguments differing little, if at all, from those which the objectors to railways employed in the age which succeeded them. If such a mode of conveyance became at all general, it had been urged, it would inevitably prove fatal to the breed of horses and to the noble art of horsemanship. The Thames, which had

[1] J. E. Austen-Leigh's *Memoirs of Jane Austen.*

long been an important nursery of seamen, would cease to be the chief thoroughfare from London up to Windsor and down to Gravesend. Saddlers and spurriers would be ruined by hundreds. Numerous roadside inns at which mounted travellers had been in the habit of stopping would be deserted, and would no longer pay any rent. The new carriages were too hot in summer and too cold in winter. The passengers were grievously annoyed by invalids and squalling children. The coach frequently reached the inn so late that it was impossible to get supper, and sometimes started so early that it was impossible to get breakfast.[1] That this torrent of rhetoric produced much effect upon the race of innkeepers, spurriers, and saddlers is not to be supposed. They had sense enough to perceive that a change was inevitable, and consequently they set themselves 'to swell the triumph or partake the gale.'

M. Misson, an eminent French traveller, visited England in 1719, and in a narrative of his travels which he subsequently published, he mentions, among the several ways of travelling in England, 'the coaches that go to all the great towns by moderate journeys, and others which they call flying coaches, that will travel twenty leagues a day and more, but these do not go to all places.' Horses might be hired for any length of time. Besides these there were waggons which the traveller describes as 'great carts covered in, that lumber along but very heavily,' and which he asserts were used by none but 'a few poor old women.' The 'flying coaches' that Misson alludes to were, in all probability, those that traversed the best and most frequented roads, while the coaches running what he calls 'moderate journeys' were doubtless those that plodded their weary way over the common roads. The word 'flying,' as applied to coaches of that period, must be taken for what it is worth. To travellers (before the age which witnessed the birth of Macadam) who were accustomed to find the roads in a most miserable state, the stage-coach moving at the rate of four or five miles an hour, a rate which it is tolerably certain they never exceeded, must have appeared nothing short of a miracle.[2]

[1] John Cresset's *Reasons for Suppressing Stage Coaches.*
[2] Twiss's *Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon*, i. 48, 49.

It was probably one of these 'flying' coaches to which Daniel Defoe refers in the account which he gives of his 'Tour through Great Britain,' when he says that at the period of his visit the town of Ipswich in Suffolk possessed among other advantages that of speedy communication with the capital, as a fast coach covered the distance between the two in the space of one day. Of how many hours the coach 'day' was composed in the early part of the eighteenth century does not appear. Most likely it comprised the time between sunrise and sunset, with an occasional brief interval for refreshment. For a period of fully thirty-six years no stage coach ever journeyed after nightfall, but as time went on they commenced to run on moonlight nights. Such, at any rate, was the case in 1740 when Fielding wrote and published his novel of 'Joseph Andrews.' Chapter xii. of that work, it may be remembered, narrates how the hero after having been robbed of all his possessions by footpads was left for dead in a ditch near the highway at night; where, after lying 'motionless a long time, he just began to recover his senses as a stage-coach came by. The postilion hearing a man's groans, stopped his horses and told the coachman.'

Until the middle of the century coachmen were forbidden to drive coaches on the seventh day, but this law was soon relaxed; a limited number received a licence for that purpose on certain roads, and at last all restrictions were removed. In the early days of coaching, no coachman professed his ability to control more horses than those fastened to the shafts, consequently, when more than two horses were employed, the leader, or one of the leaders, was ridden by a postilion.

The 'Daily Advertiser,' January 9, 1745, advertises that

For Chester, Coventry, or any part of that road, a good coach and six horses will set out from the George and White Hart Inn, in Aldersgate Street, to-morrow or Friday next, the 10th and 11th inst., where any family or passengers may be accommodated to any part of that road. For Hull, York, Scarborough, or any part of that road, a handsome glass coach and six able horses will set out from Mr. Newman's, the George and Blue Boar Inn, in Holborn, on Friday next, the 11th inst. Perform'd by George Dinmoore.

Richard Thomson, in his 'Tales of an Antiquary,' causes that garrulous old gentleman to favour his auditory with what he remembered of the stage-coaches of his own young days :—

Stage coaches (he is made to observe) were constructed principally of a dull black leather, thickly studded by way of ornament with black, broad-headed nails, tracing out the panels ; in the upper tier of which were four oval windows, with heavy, red wooden frames, or leathern curtains. Upon the doors also were displayed, in large characters, the names of the places whence the coach started, and whither it went, stated in quaint and antique language. The vehicles themselves varied in shape. Sometimes they were like a distiller's vat, somewhat flattened, and hung equally balanced between the immense front and back springs. In other instances they resembled a violoncello case, which was past all comparison the most fashionable form ; and then they hung in a more genteel posture, namely, inclining on to the back springs, and giving to those who sat within the appearance of a stiff Guy Faux uneasily seated. The roofs of the coaches in most cases rose into a swelling curve, which was sometimes surrounded by a high iron guard. The coachman and the guard, who always held his carbine ready cocked upon his knee, then sat together ; not as at present, upon a close, compact, varnished seat, but over a very long and narrow boot, which passed under a large spreading hammercloth, hanging down on all sides, and finished with a glowing and most luxuriant fringe. Behind the coach was the immense basket, stretching far and wide beyond the body, to which it was attached by long iron bars or supports passing beneath it, though even these seemed scarcely equal to the enormous weight with which they were frequently loaded. These baskets were, however, never great favourites, although their difference of price caused them to be frequently well filled. The wheels of these old carriages were large, massive, ill-formed, and usually of a red colour, and the three horses that were affixed to the whole machine —the foremost of which was helped onward by carrying a huge, long-legged elf of a postillion, dressed in a cocked hat, with a large green and gold riding-coat—were all so far parted from it by the great length of their traces that it was with no little difficulty that the poor animals dragged their unwieldy burden along the road. It groaned and creaked at every fresh tug which they gave it, as a ship rocking or beating up through a heavy sea strains all her timbers, with a low moaning sound, as she drives over the contending waves.[1]

This little sketch might very well have been penned by the writer with a print of Hogarth's Country Inn Yard scene lying before him, seeing that it tallies with this particular production

[1] *Tales of an Antiquary*, ed. 1832, iii. 92-5.

of his inimitable pencil in almost every particular. That scene depicting as it does the yard of one of the inns on the Dover road —'The Old Angle In, Toms Bates, from London'—a legend which is evidently a sly hit at the orthography current in Hogarth's day, affords a remarkably interesting description of the peculiarities of stage-coach travelling as they existed about the time Fielding penned his description of them in 'Joseph Andrews.' This very novel supplies a curious illustration of the assumptions of superiority by those who travelled in the stage-coaches, one of the last places in the world where they might have been supposed to lurk. One of the characters, a Miss Graveairs, the daughter of a gentleman's steward who had ridden postilion to a squire's coach, while the coach was waiting in the inn yard retarded the entrance of passengers into it by protesting, 'despite the remonstrance of all the rest, against the admittance of a footman into the coach,' poor Joseph Andrews being 'too lame to mount a horse.' A young lady who was the grand-daughter of an earl begged almost with tears in her eyes that the poor footman might be allowed to enter. The worthy parson Abraham Adams prayed. Mrs. Slipslop scolded. But all to no purpose. Miss Graveairs was inexorable, and told the petitioners that 'there were waggons on the road,' and that if the coachman desired it she would rather pay for two places than that such a fellow should be suffered to come in. 'Madam,' said Slipslop, 'I am sure no one can refuse another coming into a stage-coach.' 'I don't know, madam,' said the lady, 'I am not much used to stage-coaches, I seldom travel in them.' In the end Miss Graveairs was transferred by her father to another coach.[1]

But, although 'flying coaches' were on the road, and neck-or-nothing mortals, as they were called, travelled by them, they were expensive. The majority of people either patronised the waggons or, which was more frequently the case, they stopped at home. A journey to or from Newcastle to London was in those days a doubtful and hazardous expedition—not unlike setting out in quest of the north-west passage. Many persons would, when they determined to attempt the achievement, make their wills before setting out. Intercourse between so important a

[1] *Joseph Andrews*, b. ii. c. 5.

town as Liverpool and the metropolis, as well as between that port and the interior of the country, was very rare so late as the year 1753.[1] At that time there was not a single stage-coach that left the place for any other town in the kingdom. People who wanted to travel had either to do so on horseback, in their own or hired carriages, or to journey in companies. Every Friday morning William Knowles, George Glover, William Thornton, or James Lancaster, started from the Swan with Two Necks, Lad Lane, London, 'with a gang of horses' for the conveyance of passengers and light goods, and reached Liverpool on the Monday evening following. This was then considered very swift travelling. The old Lancashire and Cheshire stage-waggons, which started from the Axe Inn, Aldermanbury, London, every Monday and Thursday, were ten days on the road in summer and eleven in winter; goods were forwarded from Liverpool at about the same speed of travelling by various carriers to the principal towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Not until April 1774 did a stage-coach begin to run between Manchester, Warrington, and Liverpool, and then only thrice a week. During the same year a 'machine' was set running between Liverpool and Preston.

In 1748 a family about to embark at Falmouth hired a coach and horses for that purpose in London. The coachman not caring to return to London without passengers began to cast about. A party of young men in the port availed themselves of the opportunity to journey to the metropolis on the stipulation that if they drove into a town during the day, if a cock-fight took place, the coach was to wait for them.[2] With the second half of the century a vast improvement was effected in the speed of the coaches, though very little in the vehicles themselves. A number of the 'Salisbury Journal' for 1752 contained the following advertisement :—

For the better conveyance of travellers, the Exeter fast coach starts every Monday from the Saracen's Head, Skinner Street, Snow Hill, London. Monday dines at Egham, lies at Murrell's

[1] Baines's *Hist. of Liverpool*, p. 418; Brookes's *Liverpool in the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century.*

[2] Davies Gilbert's *Hist. of Cornwall.*

Green. Tuesday dines at Sutton, lies at Plume of Feathers in Salisbury. Wednesday dines at Blandford, lies at King's Arms in Dorchester. Thursday at one o'clock, Exeter.

The summer alone rendered this rate of travelling possible (that is fifty miles a day). During the winter months coaches were unable to accomplish the distance in less than six days, and then they travelled thirty miles a day; and as the dangers of the road were much too great for people to ride outside, six inside places were booked. Life friendships and life antipathies were often made and cemented in the long coach journeys, where people sat opposite to each other all day, dined at the same board, and slept at the same inn, sometimes for the space of nearly a week. The practice seems to have been for the gentlemen to pay the expenses of the ladies. M. Jean Pierre Grosley, in his 'Tour to London,' gives the following account of his coach journey from Dover to the metropolis in April 1765:—

> The great multitude of passengers with which Dover was then crowded afforded a reason for dispensing with a law of the police by which public carriages are in England forbid to travel on Sunday. I myself set out on a Sunday with seven more passengers in two carriages called 'flying machines.' These vehicles, which are drawn by six horses, go twenty-eight leagues in a day, from Dover to London, for a single guinea. Servants are entitled to a place for half that money, either behind the coach or upon the coach-box, which has three places. The coachmen, whom we changed every time with our horses, were lusty, well-made, dressed in good cloth. When they set off, or were for animating their horses, I heard a sort of periodical noise resembling that of a stick striking against the nave of the forewheel, customary with English coachmen to give their horses the signal for setting off.[1]

Five years before this a flying machine had begun to run between Sheffield and London, accomplishing the journey in three days. The passengers slept the first night at the Black Man's Head Inn, Nottingham, the following night at the Angel Inn, Northampton, and arrived at the Swan with Two Necks in Lad Lane during the evening of the third day. It was customary for the proprietors to give notice of the sleeping accommodation provided in the coaches on their bills. Thus, the Manchester 'machine, from the Swan with Two Necks, in two

[1] *Tour to London*, i. p. ii.

days, on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays ; sleep at Derby.' 'Sheffield and Manchester from the same, on same day, in two days ; sleep at Nottingham.'

Locomotion in the days of the Georges was a most serious undertaking, breakdowns, overthrows, and 'stickings fast' in the mire being the order of the road. None but those who could not avoid it ever entertained the idea of travelling into any quarter of their country, while as to travelling for the sake of pleasure, that never entered the heads of our great-grandfathers and grandmothers. The author of the essay on English roads, in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for 1752, to which allusion has been made, states that as matters then stood 'a party of gentlemen and ladies would have sooner travelled to the south of France and back again, than down to Falmouth or the Land's End.' All beyond Salisbury and Dorchester was a *terra incognita*, and the mapmakers, in his opinion, might, if they had pleased, have filled the vacuities of Devon and Cornwall with forests, sands, elephants, savages, or what else they chose.[1] A rich citizen in London, or a gentleman of large fortune eastwards, had then perhaps some relatives in the west of England. Half a dozen times in his lifetime he heard of their welfare by the post, and once in a way perchance received a present from them when some western curate posted up to town to get institution to a benefice. Beyond that there was no intercommunication, and 'the rich citizen in London' thought no more of visiting his relatives in the west of England than he did of traversing the deserts of Nubia, considering them as 'a sort of separate beings, which might as well be in the moon or in *limbo patrum*.' This essayist furnishes Mr. Urban and his readers with a curious sample of west-country rustic reasoning in the matter of turnpike roads. He states that when a new turnpike road was first constructed between London and Bath, the Marlborough stage-coachman would insist upon going round

by a miserable waggon track, called Ramsbury narrow way. One by one, from little to less, he dawdled away all his passengers, and

[1] *Gent.'s Mag.* xxii. 552.

when asked why he was such an obstinate idiot, his answer was (in a grumbling tone) 'that he was now an aged man, that he relished not new fantasies, that his grandfather and father had driven the aforesaid way before him, and that he would continue in the old track till his death, though his four horses only drew a passenger fly.'

The proprietor, however, failed to see any wit in this defence. The old coachman resigned, and a youth somewhat less conscientious reigned in his stead. With this Mr. Urban's correspondent supplies the sentiments of Jack Whipcord of Blandford, the most solemn-looking waggoner on the road, when interrogated as to what he thought of the innovation. He replied that he thought that roads had but one object, namely, waggon-driving. He required, he said, but five feet width in a line (which he resolved never to quit), and all the rest might go to the devil. Furthermore, he considered that the gentry ought to stay at home and not run up and down the country. 'But,' added Jack, 'we will soon cure them, for my brethren since the late act have made a vow to run our wheels in the coach quarter. We tack on a sixth or seventh horse at pleasure. No turnpikes—no improvement of roads. The scripture is for me—Jerem. vi. 16.' This 'profane country wag' had not read his Bible altogether in vain, for on turning to the passage of Jeremiah's prophecy which he mentioned, the reader will find these words :—'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein ; and ye shall find rest for your souls !'

Of the marvellous rapidity of travelling which is one of the most remarkable features of the present age, our forefathers had no conception. Railroads and locomotives slumbered in the womb of time, and no one as yet had even ventured to predict the parturition of the parent. If Squire Western had been told that within a hundred years of the time he first journeyed to London his successors would be enabled to pass, by the application of mechanical power, without inconvenience and without danger, over a distance of forty-five miles in one hour, he would have treated the tale as one more fitted for the delectation of the occupants of a nursery than for himself.

People who travelled in their own private carriages were not

exempt from dangers. Mrs. Pendarves, writing to Mrs. Anne Granville from London on November 7, 1728, says :—

I believe that you have some curiosity to know how I was entertained during my journey. At the end of the town some part of the coach broke, and we were obliged to get out, and took shelter at an alehouse ; in half an hour we jogged on, and about an hour after that flop we went into a slough, not overturned but stuck. Well, out we were hauled again, and the coach with much difficulty was heaved out. We then once more set forward, and came to our journey's end about five o' the clock, without any other accident or fright, and met with no waters worth getting out of the coach for.[1]

Mrs. Delany, writing to Mrs. Dewes from the Angel Inn, Oxford, on November 14, 1753, says :—

We are just safely arrived hither, but no thanks to Mr. Peyton's bad equipage. This day we have had no overturn or fright, but as much vexation as we could have without a bad accident, for at Long Compton the iron bar behind the chaise broke. Well, we had nothing to do but wait till it was mended. They said it would take two hours.[2]

The author of a well-written essay on the roads of England viewed in comparison with those of continental countries, published in the November number of the 'Gentleman's Magazine' 1752, states that in a journey he took from London to Falmouth along 'the second principal road in the kingdom,' he never set eyes upon a turnpike for 220 miles after the first forty-seven miles from the capital. The roads in the vicinity of Tunbridge Wells are described by Horace Walpole in a letter to Richard Bentley, dated

Battel, August 5, 1752. Reaching 'Tunbridge town,' his party found to their dismay that the principal inn was full of farmers and tobacco, and the next morning, when we were bound for Penshurst, the only man in the town who had two horses would not let us have them, because the roads, as he said, were so bad. We were forced to send to the Wells for others, which did not arrive till half the day was spent, we all the while up to the head and ears in a market of sheep and oxen.[3]

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[1] *Autob. and Corr. of Mrs. Delany*, 1st series, i. 176.
[2] *Ibid.* iii. 238.
[3] Walpole's *Letters*, ed. Cunningham, ii. 297-9.

Between Lamberhurst and Hurstmonceaux, Walpole states that

the roads were bad beyond all badness, the night dark beyond all darkness, our guide frightened beyond all frightfulness. However, without being all killed, we got up or down, I forget which, it was so dark, a famous precipice called Silver Hill, and about ten at night arrived at a wretched village called Rotherbridge. We had still six miles hither, but determined to stop, as it would be a pity to break our necks before we had seen all we intended. But alas, there was only one bed to be had, all the rest were inhabited by smugglers, whom the people of the house called mountebanks; and with one of whom the lady of the den told Mr. Chute he might lie. We did not at all take to this society, but armed with links and lanthorns set out again upon this impracticable journey. At two o'clock in the morning we got hither to a still worse inn, and that crammed with excise officers, one of whom had just shot a smuggler. However, we were neutral powers, we have passed safely through both armies hitherto, and can give you a little farther history of our wandering through these mountains, where the young gentlemen are forced to drive their curricles with a pair of oxen. The only morsel of good road we have found was what even the natives had assured us was totally impracticable; these were eight miles to Hurst Monceaux.

It is mentioned by Tate Wilkinson, the patentee of the Theatres Royal at York and Hull, in the memoirs of his life published in 1790, that he occupied two days in proceeding from Stamford to York in the year 1763.

The roads were so bad (says he) at particular seasons of the year, that they were for want of proper forming almost impassable; and it has been known in the winter to have been eight or ten days' journey from York to London. At that time it was not so familiar as it now is for ladies and gentlemen to fly like air-balloons from the farthest points of east and west, and from north to south.[1]

Referring to a journey from Norwich to Newmarket on Monday, April 17, 1758, he says :—

I was called up early on the Monday morning to be ready for the coach, but judge my disappointment and chagrin when on my approach I found it chock full, as is often said at the theatre. . . . I petitioned, reasoned, urged, and entreated, but all to no effect; I could not make any impression on the obdurate souls, who proud and sulky, kept easy and firm possession of their seats, and hardly deigned to answer, when I requested permission to be squeezed in,

[1] *Memoirs*, iii. 142.

but could not soften their hard hearts . . . the inside passengers called aloud on Mr. Whip to drive on, so my trunks &c. were left in the basket, and I was hoisted on the coach-box as the only alternative; but on the first movement of the vehicle, if it had not been for the arm of the coachman I should have been instantly under the wheels in the street, as I had not the least notion how to keep my seat; therefore the enraged travellers were under the necessity of being once more detained till I was relieved by the help of the hostler and servants of the inn, who were there and full ready to assist. I was received into their arms from the coach-box and chucked into the basket as a place of more safety, though not of ease or comfort, where I suffered most severely from the jolting, particularly over the stones; it was most truly dreadful, and made one suffer almost equal to the sea-sickness.[1]

The Rev. Thomas Twining, rector of St. Mary's, Colchester, and his party, starting on a tour through the north of England in 1776, found the road between Doncaster and Barnsley 'so rough and bad, and tedious (our wheels too wide for the rut) that we were too much out of humour to observe how pleasant it was.'[2] The journal of Judge Curwen contains the following record under date of Bristol, March 8, 1777 :—

Entered the diligence for London at one o'clock at night—the frost was so intense that our breaths formed a hard cake of ice on the glass, scarce to be taken off by the nails. At the city of Bath we arrived, a distance of twelve miles, almost stiffened with cold; where I attempted to thaw myself, but this expedient I fancy only rendered my body and feet more susceptible of the cold; suffering till the sun arose and chased away the inconceivable pain.[3]

When in November 1758, soon after he had completed his 15th year, young Paley, destined to become the apologist of Christianity, accompanied his father on horseback to Cambridge, there to be admitted a sizar of Christ's College,

I was never a good horseman (said he in after years when detailing the disasters which befell on the road), and when I followed my father on a pony of my own, on my first journey to Cambridge, I fell off seven times. I was lighter then than I am now, and my falls were not likely to be serious. My father on hearing a thump would turn his head half round and say, 'Take care of thy money, lad!'[4]

One cause which prevented stage-coaches from rising rapidly into popular esteem was the expensive fares. For long

[1] *Memoirs*, iii. 135 7. [2] *Twining Corresp.* p. 39.
[3] *Letters and Journals of S. Curwen*, p. 102.
[4] Meadley's *Memoir of Paley*, p. 5.

people continued to patronise the stage waggons which jogged along at a snail's pace. This mode of conveyance is woven by Smollett into his novel of 'Roderick Random,' which partakes largely of the character of an autobiography, and may have been, and in all probability was, the mode in which he himself journeyed to the capital with a play in his pocket in 1739. Accompanied by his faithful friend Strap, Roderick journeyed along the north road from Newcastle to London, and before long descried and overtook towards nightfall a waggon which they ascended by means of a ladder. When they had 'tumbled into the straw under the darkness of the tilt,' they made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Captain Weazel, and an old usurer with his companion, the former of whom soon began to assume the airs and graces of gentility which Fielding represented among the passengers journeying by the stage-coach. After five days' journey in this style, however, the passengers all became quite friendly, notwithstanding many mistakes and quarrels.

Thomas Pennant, the topographer, describing a stage-coach journey which he took from Chester to London in March 1740, remarks:—'The strain and labour of six good horses, sometimes eight, drew us through the sloughs of Mireden and many other places. We were constantly out two hours before day and as late at night, and in the depth of winter proportionably greater.'[1] 'Thank God,' are the words of Mrs. Scudamore in a letter to Samuel Richardson, dated Kentchurch 1757, 'we have met with no ill accident; all arrived in health. We now and then stuck a little by the way from the narrowness of the roads, which we were obliged to make wider in places by a spade.'[2] In the first half of the century, coach owners and drivers, when advertising the movements of their machines, never failed to preface them with the expression 'if God permit,' a circumstance which led at last to the cant name of a coach being 'a God permit.'[3]

Carl Philip Moritz, a Lutheran pastor, who passed seven

[1] *Journey from Chester to London*, ed. 1782, p. 137.
[2] *Richardson's Corr.* iii. 327.
[3] Grose's *Class. Dict. Eng. Tongue.*

weeks in this country in 1782, published an account of them on his return to his native land. This work contains an amusing sketch of the 'pleasures' of stage-coach travelling at that time :—

Being obliged to bestir myself (runs his account) to get back to London, as the time drew near when the Hamburgh captain with whom I intended to return had fixed his departure, I determined to take a place as far as Northampton on the outside. But this ride from Leicester to Northampton I shall remember as long as I live. My companions on the top of the coach were a farmer, a young man very decently dressed, and a blackamoor. The getting up alone was at the risk of one's life; and when I was up I was obliged to sit just at the corner of the coach with nothing to hold by but a sort of little handle fastened on the side. I sat nearest the wheel, and the moment that we set off I fancied that I saw certain death await me. All I could do was to take still faster hold of the handle, and to be more and more careful to preserve my balance. The machine now rolled along with prodigious rapidity over the stones through the town, and every moment we seemed to fly into the air. . . . As we were going up a hill and consequently proceeding rather slower than usual, I crept from the top of the coach and got snug into the basket. 'O Sir! Sir! you will be shaken to death,' said the black, but I flattered myself he exaggerated the unpleasantness of my post. As long as we went uphill it was easy and pleasant, but how was the case altered when we came to go downhill; then all the trunks and parcels began, as it were, to dance around me, and everything in the basket seemed to be alive; and I every moment received from them such violent blows that I thought my last hour was come. I now found that what the black had told me was no exaggeration; but all my complaints were useless. I was obliged to suffer this torture nearly an hour, till we came to another hill, when quite shaken to pieces and sadly bruised I again crept to the top of the coach and took possession of my former seat. About midnight we arrived at Harborough. From Harborough to Leicester I had a most dreadful journey; it rained incessantly, and as before we had been covered with dust, we now were soaked with rain.

Reaching Northampton the worthy divine immediately went to bed and slept till noon, resolving to proceed to the metropolis in some other stage-coach the next day :—

This (he writes) I could hardly call a journey, but rather perpetual motion or removal in a close box. My three travelling companions unfortunately were all farmers, who slept so soundly that even the hearty knocks of the head with which they often saluted each other did not awaken them. Our road lay through Newport Pagnel, Dunstable, St. Alban's, Barnet, to Islington or rather to London itself.

At Dunstable, if I do not mistake, we breakfasted ; and here, as is usual, everything was paid for in common by all the passengers. At length we arrived at London (he concludes) without any accident in a hard rain, about one o'clock. I looked like a crazy creature when I entered the metropolis.[1]

Travelling appears to have been not a whit the safer in the Midlands a century ago. On Wednesday, September 2, 1789, the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV.), who had been visiting Earl Fitzwilliam at Wentworth Hall in Nottinghamshire, took his departure for London in a coach, accompanied by Lord Clermont, Colonel St. Leger, Warwick Lake, and two servants. About two miles north of Newark, a cart in crossing the road struck the axle of the Prince's coach and overturned it. As it was on the verge of a slope the carriage in falling tumbled bottom uppermost and was shivered to pieces. Fortunately the occupants all escaped without receiving any material hurt.[2]

The overturning of stage-coaches was a matter of almost daily occurrence, and the strength of a Hercules was sometimes requisite in outside passengers in order to retain the balance upon the coach, more especially when it commenced to 'fly.' Passengers who constantly travelled by stage-coaches considered it a feat more than anything else. The unfortunate poet Chatterton, in writing an account of his journey by the stage-coach from Bristol to London in 1770, for the information of his sister, tells her that he was complimented by the coachman upon his courage in sitting upon the top of the machine without holding to the iron. A contributor to the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for 1771, discussing the causes of stage-coach overturnings, and suggesting improvements, assigned as the first and most manifest cause of such accidents, the great height of the coach from the ground, with the number of passengers who sat outside ; he expressed a wish that riding outside could be forbidden, though he feared that if it were, coach-owners would instantly raise the fares for riding inside, and thereby prevent

[1] Moritz's *Reise eines Deutschen in England im Jahre* 1782.

[2] *Gent.'s Mag.* September 1789, p. 856. See also other instances of coaches overturning, *Morning Chronicle*, March 14, 1778; *Public Advertiser*, March 1789.

a large number of people from making use of them at all. It is evident there was no diminution in the demand for outside places as the years rolled on, since it is recorded in the 'Annual Register' for the year 1775 that the stage-coaches carried on an average eight persons inside and ten outside, and that there were then running upwards of four hundred such vehicles.

But all these dangers and inconveniences pale into insignificance, like the glowworm in the matin light, when compared with the highwaymen and footpads—'knights of the road' as they were commonly styled. For two centuries they had been the bugbear of travellers, and they reached the zenith of their fame when the second George ascended the throne. All the approaches to the capital were infested with them. The Great North Road and Epping Forest were the Elysian fields of Dick Turpin, Jerry Abershaw, and Captain Macheath, while scores of other desperadoes, known and unknown, mounted on fleet horses, frequented Hounslow Heath, Bagshot Heath, Shooter's Hill, Blackheath, Bexley Heath, Wimbledon, Hampton, Hatton, Harlington, Wandsworth and Finchley Commons, all of which were overgrown with thick furze bushes and bulrushes, undrained and uncultivated. Highwaymen were of several kinds and degrees, but the star of the 'flying highwaymen,' so called on account of the high rate of speed at which they careered over the face of the land, evading capture, and which found its chief exponent in the person of the bold Richard Turpin, who was executed at York for horsestealing in 1739, was in the ascendent. Next came a class known as 'gentlemen highwaymen,' which was largely recruited from the ranks of necessitous and impecunious gentlemen of quality—of the Thomas King or Maclean pattern. Others there were of the type of the notorious Claude Duval, who, when stopping the coaches, would behave with the greatest regard to gallantry and politeness towards their occupants (especially the fair sex); courteously requesting to be 'favoured' with whatever valuables they carried, tendering the most abject apologies for any alarm they might have occasioned, sometimes even going to the length of returning certain articles specially endeared to the owners, and invariably closing the coach door with a graceful bow, and a cheerful 'good-night and a pleasant

journey to you.' Then too, flourished the highwayman who was the very reverse of the last-mentioned—who treated his victims, one and all, with savage coarseness and ruffianly brutality. Such a one, according to all accounts, was the infamous Joseph Blake, *alias* Blueskin, executed at Tyburn in 1723. Next came the generous class of highwaymen, who like Robin Hood, the hero of Sherwood Forest, always made a point of sharing with the poor that of which they fleeced the rich. The halo of romance with which the deeds of these buccaneers of the road were invested caused them to be regarded by the simple and the ignorant with a veneration amounting in many cases to positive deification, that seemingly is by no means so extinct as the optimists of this latter quarter of the nineteenth century might be led to suppose, judging from the manifest avidity with which a certain section of the reading public devour highly coloured accounts, professing to recount with fidelity the daring and wonderful exploits of Tom King, Jack Sheppard, Dick Turpin, Sixteen-string Jack, and other desperate characters.

It would be an easy matter, in the absence of other information, to furnish long descriptions of the doings of these buccaneers of the highways from the pamphlets and books upon the subject in which the literature of the age abounds, but there is really no necessity to turn to them, for surely in all conscience those brief and abstract chronicles of the times, the newspapers, will supply enough to fill a moderately sized volume. There is no denying that the writers of these accounts, whoever they were, occasionally drew upon their imaginations a little, or exaggerated slightly, especially when they proceed to say, as they do occasionally, that out of 'two footpads,' 'some' had been arrested by the watch, or when, in order to terrify the susceptibilities of nervous people, they go so far as to declare that 'murders and robberies have never been more frequent than during this last month,' but in the main the stories they relate are without doubt perfectly genuine ones.

In many cases, the last resource of some gaming peer or gentleman of quality encompassed by a sea of troubles, or a shopkeeper with nothing but ruin staring him in the face,

was to take to the road to replenish his exhausted treasury. A highwayman who was shot on the spot in 1725, while attempting to rob the Canterbury coach on Bexley Heath, turned out to be 'a young gentleman belonging to the sea, of good family.'[1] An abandoned rake named William Parsons, described as one who had been engaged both in the army and naval service, returning from transportation, committed a robbery on Hounslow Heath, and was subsequently hanged thereon in chains in 1750. He was the son of a Wiltshire baronet.

Between Doncaster and Bawtry (writes Mrs. Calderwood of Polton in her journal of June 7, 1756), a man rode about in an odd way, whom we suspected for a highwayman. Upon his coming near, John Rattry pretended to make a quarrel with the postboy, and let him know so loud as to be heard by the other that he kept good powder and ball to keep such folks as him in order; upon which the fellow scampered off across the common. Upon our coming to Bawtry we were told that a gentleman was robbed there some days before by a man whose description answered to the one we saw.[2]

Despite the severity of the law which condemned footpads and highwaymen to death at almost every assize, few vocations were more assiduously plied. Footpads and highwaymen infested every county by the dozen. Higglers and farmers could not proceed or return from market without carrying a brace of pistols on their person. In 1765 a highwayman was shot at Loughton, on the borders of Epping Forest, by an armed guard accompanying the haycarts from London. Baynes states that it was customary for the Essex farmers who attended Colchester market to take their departure several hours before sunset, in order that they might proceed homewards after the fashion of a caravan in the sands of Arabia, on account of the robberies which were committed if they travelled alone. In 1761 one highwayman in particular, known by the name of the 'Flying Highwayman,' engrossed the conversation of most of the towns within twenty miles of London, as he had occasionally visited all the public roads round the metropolis, and had collected several sums of money. He rode upon three different horses—a grey, a sorrel, and a black one—the last of which

[1] Harris's *Life of Lord Hardwicke*, i. 171. [2] *Journal*, p. 5.

had a black face, to hide which he generally hung on a black cat's skin. 'He has leaped over Colnbrook turnpike a dozen times within this fortnight, and is now well known to most of the turnpike men on the different roads about town.'[1] Hawkes was the real name of this 'flying highwayman,' who was long the terror of the Bath and Oxford roads. A highwayman is introduced into most of the novels which were produced during the eighteenth century. Roderick Random, Mrs. and Miss Snapper, and the captain, while traversing Hounslow Heath at daybreak in a stage-coach, were apprised by Strap, in a great fright, that two men on horseback were crossing it, and making directly towards them. This piece of intelligence convulsed the company. Mrs. Snapper straightway commenced to shriek; her daughter grew pale; the lawyer's teeth chattered, as he muttered, ''Tis no matter—we'll sue the county and recover;' the captain, who had not long before loudly boasted of the double-loaded pair of pistols which he took from a horse officer at the battle of Dettingen, manifested signs of alarm; Roderick alighted, commanded the coachman to stop, mounted his friend's horse, and put the highwaymen to confusion. Fielding's hero, Tom Jones, and his companion Partridge journeyed on horseback to London in company with a stranger whom they met on the road. Within a mile of Highgate, the horseman turned upon Jones, and presenting a pistol demanded the little banknote which Partridge had been indiscreet enough to mention in the course of conversation. The highwayman was met with a blank refusal, and a struggle ensued, in which Jones gained possession of his adversary's pistol, which turned out to be unloaded. The highwayman, who was only a youth, fell down upon his knees and implored mercy. Jones granted it and presented him with two guineas for the support of his wife and five hungry children, on account of whose destitution he solemnly declared he had taken to evil courses. Now and then highwaymen behaved very considerately towards their victims. A certain knight of the road stopped two travellers mounted on horseback, near Maidenhead in Buckinghamshire, and robbed them of thirty

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, Chron. 1761, p. 189.

guineas, but on learning that they were journeying to Bath, he had the courtesy to return them a couple of guineas wherewith to defray their expenses. Another desperado, Captain McClean by name, having accidentally wounded a gentleman while stopping a coach, and feeling regret for having done so, not only sent him two letters of apology, but incidentally mentioned that if there were any valuables he particularly wished to recover, he should be happy to meet him by Tyburn Gate at midnight and sell them to him for a trifle. Of another highwayman who systematically plundered the stage-coach passengers, the newspaper report said that 'he behaved genteelly, and by way of apology for what he did told the passengers that his distresses drove him to it.' The newspapers of the age fairly glow with accounts of coach and chaise stoppings on the heaths, commons, and open spaces which abounded around London at this period. An Irish gentleman who wrote a narrative abounding in curious information of his journey through England in the year 1752, alludes with secret satisfaction to the fact of his having crossed 'the large open plain called Finchley Common, so celebrated for the frequent murders and robberies committed there,' and goes on to relate how an apothecary 'to animate' the company told them of his knowing five stage-coaches to be robbed by a single man, 'and they all together.' 'We travelled here under some anxiety,' he continues, 'and suspected every bush for a tory. Many gibbets are up over all this common, and I saw no less than five within a pistol-shot of each other, which made me wonder it did not deter these villains from such practices.'

The ease with which both footpads and highwaymen arrested the progress of the stage-coaches, and the expedition with which they relieved the passengers of their jewellery, money, and other articles in the last century, seems almost incredible. Such operations were doubtless facilitated by the connivance not only of innkeepers, but also by that of guards and stout, jovial coachmen, who thought nothing of flicking off the flies from the eyelids of their leaders. How else is it possible to account for such occurrences as those related in the following paragraphs?—

Last week Mr. Frederick Bull, an eminent tea merchant in Cornhill, coming from Wolverhampton in Staffordshire to London, was overtaken on the road by a single man on horseback whom he took for a gentleman; but after they had rode three or four miles together he then ordered him to deliver, which Mr. Bull took to be in jest, but he told him that he was in earnest, and accordingly robbed him of about 4 guineas and his watch, and afterwards rode with him three miles, till they came near a town, when the highwayman rode off.[1]

Birmingham, May 6, 1751.—On Tuesday last the Shrewsbury caravan was stopped between the Four Crosses and the Welsh Harp by a single highwayman, who behaved very civilly to the passengers, told them that he was a stranger in distress, and hoped that they would contribute to his assistance. On which each passenger gave him something, to the amount in the whole of about 4*l.*, with which he was mighty well satisfied, but returned some halfpence to one of them, saying he never took copper. He told them there were two other collectors on the road, but he would see them out of danger, which he accordingly did, and begged that they would not at their next inn mention the robbery nor appear against him if he should be taken up hereafter.

It has been mentioned that all highwaymen were not professional. Instances may be found where these temporary highwaymen have been recognised by their own friends in spite of their false tones of voice and crape masks, often with sad results. Such was the case according to the subjoined paragraph transcribed from the February number of the 'Universal Magazine' 1775 :—

January 6.—On Wednesday Mr. Browar, print cutter, near Aldersgate Street, was attacked on the road to Enfield by a single highwayman, whom he recollected to be a tradesman in the City. He accordingly called him by his name, when the robber shot himself through his head.

No rank or station was exempt from the demands of the highway 'collectors' as they were pleased to style themselves; the peer and the ploughman were alike forced to obey their commands.

In November 1774 Lord Berkeley was passing over Hounslow Heath in the dusk of the evening in a postchaise. The driver was called upon to stop by a well-dressed young highwayman. As the driver did not do so quickly, the highwayman discharged his pistol at the chaise. Thereupon Lord Berkeley

[1] *Birmingham Gazette*, Oct. 18, 1742.

returned the fire and shot him dead.[1] Lord North, writing to a correspondent named Cooper from Bushey Park on October 5, 1774, says :—

I was robbed last night as I expected. Our loss was not great, but as the postillion did not stop immediately, one of the two highwaymen fired at him and bruised his side. It was at the end of Gunnersbury Lane.[2]

On March 2, 1775, Mr. Nuthall, solicitor to the Treasury, while returning from Bath to London, was attacked on Hounslow Heath by a single highwayman, who on not finding his demands readily complied with fired into the carriage, which contained besides Nuthall a young lady and a little boy. Nuthall returned the highwayman's fire and wounded him sorely as he hastily rode off. When the coach arrived at the inn at Hounslow, Nuthall wrote a description of the rascal in order to send it to Sir John Fielding, but before the ink was dry he was a corpse. Nine months later the Norwich stage, when nearing Epping town, was attacked in broad daylight by seven highwaymen, three of whom were shot dead by the guard ; but his ammunition failing he was shot dead himself, and the occupants of the coach were robbed by the remaining members of the gang.[3]

The 'Daily Advertiser' for Tuesday, May 5, 1778, records :—

On Sunday night about ten o'clock ten gentlemen of Sherborn Lane, part in a coach and the rest in a phaeton, were stopped near Lea Bridge by two footpads, who robbed all the company of their money, from one of whom they took five guineas.

The 'Gazetteer' of Tuesday, May 5, of the same year records that

On Saturday last intelligence was received in the public office in Bow Street, that on Thursday evening on the common between Blackwater and Hatfield Bridge, a gentleman was stopped in a postchaise by three young highwaymen, well mounted and of genteel appearance, who robbed him of his purse and a very valuable watch.

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[1] *Gent.'s Mag.* 1774, p. 539. In the same year William Gardiner of Leicester and a friend were stopped by three footpads near Norwich, *Rems.* iii. 95.

[2] *Marq. Aberg. MSS. Eridge Castle.*

[3] *Ann. Reg.* pp. 96 and 182.

The 'Morning Chronicle' for May 14, 1778, records that

On Sunday, as the Aylesbury coach was coming on the road between Hillingdon and Uxbridge, it was overset, by which accident a young man who sat on the top had both his legs broken; and another had the calf of his leg torn in a very dangerous manner.

The 'Daily Advertiser' for Friday, June 5, 1778, records that

On Wednesday night a gentleman in a postchaise on his return to town from Windsor, was attacked near Turnham Green by three footpads, who robbed him of fifteen guineas, some silver, and a gold watch.

The 'London Chronicle' for January 1, 1782, chronicles :—

Last Monday morning two of the North stage-coaches going from London were stopped in the Holloway Road by three footpads well armed, who robbed the passengers of their money, and also carried off some small parcels which were going into the country as presents.

Tuesday evening a gentleman of Gray's Inn was robbed by two highwaymen on the Hertford road of a gold watch and some money.

A few weeks ago (says the 'Morning Chronicle') the mail was robbed on the Great North Road between Muskham and Newark, and several bags of letters conveyed away which contained bills and notes to a considerable amount.

The 'Morning Chronicle' for January 14, 1782, states that

Last Friday night, a little after eight o'clock, as Mr. Somerby was coming from Peckham in Surrey to London, he was stopped by two footpads in the North Fields, and on endeavouring to run away, one of them struck him with a stick which cut his lip quite through, and the other struck one of his legs so violently as caused him to fall; they took from him four guineas and half, and his watch, and then ran off.

The 'Morning Chronicle,' January 7, 1782, records that

On Wednesday, between four and five o'clock, as the Right Honourable Lord Melbourne was going to his house in Hertfordshire, he was attacked about eighteen miles from town by two highwaymen extremely well mounted, and robbed of his watch and money, after which they rode off full speed towards London.

The 'London Chronicle' for March 5, 1789, states that

Yesterday se'nnight John Faucett, Esq., of Oxfordshire, was stopt near Shepherd's Bush by two footpads, who robbed him of his watch and seven guineas.

The 'Public Advertiser' for January 1, 1790, records that

On Tuesday evening a waggoner was stopped near the Old Hats, in the Uxbridge Road, by four footpads, who, after robbing, beat him in so dreadful a manner that he could not walk, and was found by some persons passing on the road, lying in the path.

In the same journal for January 2, it is stated that

On Thursday morning, between two and three o'clock, Joseph Priest, who was driving his cart to Covent Garden market, was stopped by four footpads between the Hand and Flower and Dun Cow public houses on the Hammersmith Road, who, with dreadful imprecations, swore they would rob him ; but, on searching him and finding he had not any money about him, they beat him in a most cruel manner with thick bludgeons with which each of them was armed.

The 'Public Advertiser' for January 5, 1790, records that

On Sunday, as Mr. Wells and his wife were going over Putney Common in a single-horse chaise, they were stopped about the middle of the Common, at twelve o'clock at noon, by two highwaymen, with crapes over their faces, who robbed them of a gold watch and nine guineas. They were very young men, and behaved very civilly. They were exceedingly well mounted on black horses.

The issue of the same journal for January 20 of the same year records that

On Sunday evening, as two gentlemen from Harlow were returning to town, they were stopped by two highwaymen, well mounted, a little on this side the Eagle at Snaresbrook, who robbed them of their purses containing about seven guineas.

The same journal for March 26, 1790, records :—

On Tuesday afternoon, between the hours of five and six o'clock, Dr. Bloxham of Guildford was stopped on Wimbledon Common in a postchaise by two highwaymen, well mounted, who robbed the doctor of a 10*l.*-banknote and seven guineas.

April 22, 1790 :—

Saturday last, at noon, a most daring robbery was committed by four highwaymen, well mounted, on the common about a mile and a half beyond Maidenhead. They stopped and robbed a lady and gentleman in a postchaise, although there was another chaise one of the Oxford post coaches, and other carriages, besides gentle, men and servants riding on horseback on the Common at the same

time, and not many hundred yards distant from the spot. After having done their business, they galloped off down the Common in a direction for Windsor. The robbers had crape over their faces.

The 'Morning Chronicle' for January 14, 1797, states that

A very gallant highway robbery was lately committed on Wimbledon Common upon the person of a young married lady. After receiving her purse, the robber politely demanded an elegant ring which he discovered on her finger. This she peremptorily refused, saying, 'She would sooner part with life;' the hero of the turf rejoined, 'Since you value the ring so much, madam, allow me the honour of saluting the fair hand which wears it, and I shall deem it a full equivalent!' The hand was instantly stretched through the chariot window, and the kiss being received, the highwayman thanked her for her condescension, and instantly galloped off perfectly satisfied with the commutation.

The 'Times' of January 18, 1797, records that

On Monday afternoon about four o'clock, as Lord Borringdon was returning to London, between Wimbledon Common and Putney town he was stopped by a single highwayman, and robbed of his watch and cash; his servant was likewise robbed of his watch.

A paragraph in the 'Times' for January 1, 1798, says:—

On Friday evening, about 5 o'clock, as the Dean of Canterbury was travelling over Hounslow Heath in a postchaise, he was stopped by several footpads, who robbed him of three 25*l.* notes, and a King James's guinea, with which they got clear off.

The same journal for January 2 records that

On Sunday evening, about six o'clock, as Messrs. Harrison and Lockhart, the advocates for Captain Williamson, were returning to town from Sheerness in a postchaise, they were stopped on Shooter's Hill, and robbed of their purses and watches by two footpads. The man on Mr. Harrison's side treated him with much personal violence, by forcing his pistol into his mouth on opening the chaise door. A son of Lord Audley, a midshipman of the 'Venerable,' was also in the chaise; the footpads did not ask for his money, but took away his trunk containing all his clothes.[1]

These extracts will have served to demonstrate the state of the highways in the vicinity of the metropolis down to the close of the eighteenth century, and with how many dangers

[1] See also *Annual Register*, 1797, p. 6; Mrs. Papendick's *Journal*, i. 99, 122, 123.

the peregrinations of English people through their own land were attended. When so many nights had to be passed upon the road, sitting inside or outside of a top-heavy coach in the teeth of an easterly wind or a heavy gale, inns and alehouses were a primary consideration among travellers. Pictures of some of these hostelries, with their floors of sanded brick, and samplers and ballads adorning the walls, as they existed in the eighteenth century, are furnished in the pages of the novelists. They disappeared with the birth of the steam-engine and the construction of railroads. Arthur Young, who has nothing but censure for the turnpike roads by which he travelled, has mostly praise for the inns at which he put up on his peregrinations, especially in his tour through the northern counties of England.[1] The inns which the novelists have described for posterity seem to have been tolerably comfortable, if they were nothing else, and to have been divided into two departments, the parlour and the kitchen, the former being reserved for the use of people of quality, and the latter for the humbler class of travellers. The inn-yards were always plentifully supplied with chaises and horses, ready for use at a very short notice. Readers of Fielding's 'Joseph Andrews' will remember that 'it was in the dusk of the evening' when a grave person rode into the inn where poor Joseph lay waxing well of his deep wound, and committing his horse to the hostler, went directly into the kitchen, and having called for a pipe of tobacco, took his place by the fireside where several persons were likewise assembled.[2] This 'grave person' was none other than the worthy parson, Abraham Adams, a country clergyman, 'an excellent scholar, a perfect master of the Greek and Latin languages,' and one who at the age of fifty was provided with a handsome income of twenty-three pounds per annum, 'which, however, he could not make any great figure with, because he lived in a dear country and was a little incumbered with a wife and six children.' To the same inn came another divine, the Rev. Mr. Barnabas, who had been called to administer spiritual

[1] *Northern Tour,* iv. 586–94. The neatness and goodness of the inns on all the great roads of England in 1760 are commended by Joseph Baretti in his *Travels*, i. 5.

[2] C. xiv.

consolation to poor Joseph Andrews, who was thought to be dying. Andrews having expressed contrition for his sins, 'Barnabas said that was enough and proceeded to prayer with all the expedition he was master of, some company then waiting for him below in the parlour, where the ingredients for punch were all in readiness, but no one would squeeze the oranges till he came.' Travellers whose pockets would not allow them to take up their quarters in the inns, sought the shelter of the roadside alehouses which were to be met with frequently. One such is described by Smollett in his novel of 'Sir Launcelot Greaves.' 'The kitchen was the only room for entertainment in the house, paved with red bricks, remarkably clean, furnished with three or four Windsor chairs, adorned with shining plates of pewter and copper saucepans nicely scoured, that even dazzled the eyes of the beholder.' It would seem that as the years sped on, innkeepers and their wives got more and more to fight shy of accommodating those who were not richly apparelled, and of all who did not travel in coaches or carriages. This did not fail to escape the observant eye of the foreigner. Moritz, a Lutheran pastor, who undertook a walking tour through the midland counties of England in the summer of 1782, specially noted this unwillingness. Oftentimes, he states, he was refused both food and shelter at a common roadside alehouse merely because he journeyed on foot. Once, during his progress through Oxfordshire, he contrived to procure admission to an inn at Nettlebed, where, as he says,

> They showed me into the kitchen, and set me down to sup at the same table with some soldiers and the servants. I now for the first time found myself in one of those kitchens I had so often read of in Fielding's fine novels, and which certainly gave me on the whole a very accurate idea of English manners.

The following day, being the Sabbath, Moritz arrayed his person in clean linen, whereupon he was ushered by the host and hostess into the parlour, where he was addressed by the most respectful term, Sir; whereas the evening before he had been called only Master.[1]

[1] *Reise eines Deutschen in England im Jahre* 1782.

Speaking of a tour into the north of England made in the summer of 1775, George Colman the younger, writing in August 1827, says :—

I thought little about travelling expenses ; I cannot therefore, with any accuracy, tell at how much less cost a man might 'take his ease in his inn' in those days, than in the present ; my father, however, frequently observed upon the gradual lowering of charges in proportion to the distance from London : the articles enumerated in a bill for dinner, which were then cheap, not only grew cheaper as we went on, but, when we reach'd the northern counties were not enumerated at all ; and, instead of swelling the account with a roast fowl, sauce for ditto, potato, melted butter for ditto, to poach'd eggs, to cheese, to toasted ditto, &c. &c., the items were all consolidated under the head of 'EATING,' against which was regularly placed the sum of *One Shilling* ; and this for no scanty meal, but plenty of everything ; fish, flesh, and fowl, and excellent of their kind.[1]

The results of the statutes enacted in the reign of Anne added very considerably to the public revenue, but for long the nation did not benefit by them. Prior to 1784 the system for the transmission of letters was inefficient and ill regulated, and many a long year came and went before any plans of readjustment were carried into practical effect, so great was the indifference, so numerous the obstacles. The mail-bags were carried from place to place by messengers, on worn-out hacks, at the rate of between three and four miles an hour. Direct communication there was none. The postboys, who corresponded to the description of the one who lives for all time in the pages of Cowper's 'Task,' were miserably underpaid and often bore exceedingly doubtful characters. They dawdled on the road or they did not. Of censure or punishment, discipline or control, there was little. If the letter-bags and their contents found their way to their destinations instead of into the hands of highwaymen and footpads who waylaid them for the purpose, or at their connivance, it was a wonder. An instance of this occurred in 1757. The boy entrusted with the Portsmouth mail dismounted at a tavern near Hammersmith, Turnham Green, about three miles from Hyde Park Corner, and called for beer. While he was drinking some footpads seized the

[1] *Random Records*, i. 215.

opportunity of cutting the mail-bags from off the horse's crupper, and decamped. Nor were they ever captured.

In a newspaper paragraph of 1725, quoted by Harris in his 'Life of Hardwicke,' it is stated that

> there were no Western letters yesterday, the mail being robbed on Monday last between 11 and 12 at night, in the road near Chinock, in the midway between Crewkern and Sherburn, by one footpad, who carried off the bags belonging to all the towns between Land's End and Yeovil.[1]

Shortly afterwards the carrier of the western mail was again robbed by two footpads, who tied the postboy and carried away the Plymouth and Exeter bags.[2]

Although the Post Office Bill passed in 1710 afforded scope for the establishment of cross posts, it was not until the reign of George I. that any advantage was taken of it. In the year 1719, Ralph Allen (immortalised by Fielding in the character of Allworthy in his novel of 'Tom Jones'), postmaster at Bath, laid before Parliament a proposal for the reconstruction of the system, and succeeded in obtaining a lease of the cross posts for the term of his natural life. He became in effect 'the farmer of the cross posts,' and a vast improvement was secured to the country. Allen died in 1764.

Exactly twenty years after that event a great revolution was destined to be accomplished under John Palmer, who about 1783 was manager of the Bath and Bristol theatres. The frequency with which he corresponded with the various parts of the kingdom caused him to observe that the post which left Bath on Monday night did not deliver its letters in the metropolis until two or three o'clock on the afternoon of the following Wednesday, and oftentimes later, the letters being delivered in London at different times of the day after the arrival of each post. Palmer also noted that the Diligence coach, which left Bath early on Monday afternoon, arrived in London by ten o'clock in the morning of the following day. This led him to submit an elaborate scheme of improvement to Pitt, who was the Prime Minister of that day, in which he urged the discontinu-

[1] Harris's *Life of Hardwicke*, i. 170–1.

[2] See also Walpole's *Letters*, ix. 35, and Palmer's *Yarmouth*, i. 241.

ance of the horse post system, and the employment of coaches which in consideration of their liability to attack from robbers should each be provided with a man armed to the teeth for their defence. He was acquainted with tradespeople who adopted the plan of sending their letters by coach. 'Why, therefore,' he asked, 'should not the stage-coach, well protected by armed guards, under certain conditions to be specified, carry the mail-bags?' He also suggested that the times at which these mail coaches left should be regulated in such a manner that their arrival in London at an early hour of the morning should be simultaneous, and that their departure at the same hour in the evening should be conducted likewise. After many delays, and in the teeth of a vast amount of opposition and dissatisfaction, which proceeded from the chief officials of the Post Office, Pitt decided upon putting Palmer's scheme to the test, and the first two mail coaches, upon the plan recommended by him, left London on August 8, 1784. The first, departing at eight o'clock in the morning, reached Bristol at eleven o'clock the same night, thus accomplishing the distance between the capital and Bath in fourteen hours; while the second, quitting Bristol at four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, reached London sixteen hours later.[1] There is no necessity to enlarge upon the success of this plan. Correspondence was not only transmitted in safety, but left the old plan at an immeasurable distance as regards the rate of speed at which it was transmitted.

[1] Lewin's *Her Majesty's Mails*, pp. 76–83.

## CHAPTER XII.

### FAVOURITE HEALTH RESORTS.

The rise of the spas—Metropolitan spas—Hampstead Wells—Islington spa—The new Tunbridge Wells—Sadler's Wells—The provincial spas—Epsom—Tunbridge Wells—The baths of Bath—Beau Nash and the world he lived in—The Bristol hot-wells—Malvern, Cheltenham, Buxton, Harrogate, and Scarborough—The seaward movement—Brighthelmstone—The South coast—The Isle of Thanet—Cromer—The Lake district.

THE first quarter of the eighteenth century was specially characterised by an intense hankering, which arose primarily among the votaries of fashion and ultimately by degrees extended itself to all classes of society, after 'fresh fields and pastures new.' The earliest indications of this early awakened desire are discernible in the tendency exhibited by the fashionable world to migrate at a certain season of the year to the vicinity of some one or other of the many medicinal springs, for the purpose of taking a course of their waters, in the fond hope that it would thereby recruit its exhausted energies and acquire a new lease of life. In course of time, 'drinking the waters,' as the phrase went, came to be regarded as an absolute necessity, and thus it was that quiet hamlets, peaceful villages, and out-of-the-way spots achieved notoriety on account of a mineral spring or well which had been discovered in their neighbourhood, and were dignified with the grandiloquent designation of 'health resorts.' Posterity has not been left altogether in the dark as to the everyday life of those who favoured these localities, and from the occasional references to them in the pages of diaries, novels, and periodical publications, there is every reason to believe that all these 'health resorts,' without exception, speedily became con

taminated by the wholesale importation into them of the manners, customs, and, it must be added, the vices and frivolities of London life.

Before proceeding to the provincial health resorts it will not be uninteresting to bestow a passing glance upon some half-dozen mineral springs which existed during this period in the neighbourhood of the metropolis. The northern suburbs of London throughout the eighteenth century teemed with mineral waters.

A paragraph in the issue of the 'Post Boy' for March 8, 1707, informs

> all persons that have occasion to drink Hampstead Mineral Waters that the said Wells will be opened on Monday next, with very good musick for dancing all day long, and to continue every Monday during the season, and there is all needful accommodation for water drinkers of both sexes, and all other entertainments for good eating and drinking, and a very pleasant bowling green with convenience of coach horses, and very good stables for fine horses with good attendance, and a further accommodation of a stage coach and chariot from the Wells at any time in the evening or morning.

This 'inexhaustible fountain of health,' as it was called by one of its enthusiastic admirers, Dr. John Soame, was frequented by the 'idle, the wealthy, and the sickly,' and from being an obscure hamlet, 'chiefly inhabited by washerwomen,' was speedily transformed into a flourishing health resort. Commodious mansions began to spring up here and there, and the 'Wells' soon boasted of a tavern, a coffee-room, a dancing saloon, a bowling green, and a raffling shop, respecting which those who list may find much curious information in a paper by Steele, contributed to No. 59 of the 'Tatler.' Many were the announcements inserted in the daily newspapers of concerts held at the Long Rooms, of raffles at the Wells, of races on the Heath, of entertainments at Belsize, and, in the words of Bloom, a character in Baker's comedy of 'Hampstead Heath,' performed at Drury Lane Theatre in 1706, 'the cards play, the bowl runs, the dice rattle, some lose their money with ease and negligence, and others are well pleased to pocket it.' The waters to which the locality was indebted for its popularity are described as possessing a slight tincture of iron,

magnesia, and lime—'a stimulant diuretic,' as one physician of the time observed, 'very beneficial in chronic diseases arising from languor of the circulation or general debility of the system.' Several names of note occur in the list of those who sought relief from various bodily ailments at Hampstead Wells, particularly the poet Gay, who it is recorded was cured of the colic there in 1727, and his friend Dr. Arbuthnot, who went thither under the combined influence of asthma and dropsy in 1734. The decline of Hampstead Wells in the public estimation dates from the visit of George III. and his court to the waters of Cheltenham in the latter decade of the century.

For a brief period the waters of a mineral spring at Kilburn, near Paddington, were much frequented.

The waters (says a newspaper advertisement) are now in the utmost perfection, the Gardens enlarged and greatly improved. This happy spot is equally celebrated for its rural situation, extensive prospects, and the acknowledged efficacy of its waters, is most delightfully situated on the Edgware road, at an easy distance, being but a morning's walk from the metropolis, two miles from Oxford Street; the footway from Marylebone across the fields still nearer. A plentiful larder is always provided, together with the best of wines and other liquors. Breakfasting and hot loaves.[1]

Pre-eminent among the chalybeate spas in existence round London was one situated near the New River at Islington called 'the New Tunbridge Wells' (by reason of the close resemblance between its waters and those at Tunbridge in Kent), the original of which is still preserved in an obscure nook, amidst a poverty-stricken and squalid rookery.[2] In the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for the month of June, 1733, it is recorded that their Royal Highnesses the Princesses Amelia and Caroline frequented the spa daily for the purpose of drinking the waters, 'when such was the concourse of nobility and others that the proprietor took above 30*l.* in one morning.' Fogg's 'Journal' for June 2, 1733, states that

on Wednesday morning the Princess Amelia having gone to New Tunbridge Wells to drink the waters, at her entrance she was

[1] *Public Advertiser*, July 1773.
[2] Pink's *History of Clerkenwell.*

saluted under the discharge of several small pieces of cannon, and likewise received the compliments on account of her birthday from the assembly on the walks.

In his comedy of the 'Spleen, or Islington Spa,' performed at Drury Lane Theatre in March 1776, George Colman the elder causes a character, Mrs. Rubrick of Paternoster Row, to descant on its attractions to her friend Mrs. Tabitha, in the following terms :—

> The spa grows as genteel as Tunbridge, Brighthelmstone, Southampton, or Margate. Live in the most sociable way on earth. All the company acquainted with each other. Walks, balls, raffles, and subscriptions. Mrs. Jenkins of the Three Blue Balls, Mrs. Rummer and family from the King's Arms, and several other people of condition to be there this season. And then Eliza's wedding, you know, was owing to the spa. Oh, the watering places are the only places to get young women lovers and husbands.[1]

This spa was one of the first to suffer by the seaward movement.

Sadler's Wells, which, now obscured from view, bubble beneath the theatre of that name, were so-called from the fact of a ferruginous spring having been discovered in the garden of a 'Musickhouse, built by Mr. Sadler, on the north side of the great cistern that receives the New River water near Islington,' some time before the year 1683. The New River Head, its engine house and office, and a tavern known as the Sir Hugh Myddelton, formed a group in connection with the Wells, which all through the eighteenth century continued to be 'a daily meeting or rendezvous of people who went thither to divert themselves.' The fly in the ointment was supplied by the bill, which never failed to conclude without apprising intending visitors, especially the nobility and gentry, that there would be a horse patrol that night, armed, on the New Road between Sadler's Wells and Tottenham Court turnpike, &c., from the hours of eight to eleven. John Britton, in his entertaining reminiscences of Sadler's Wells, says that as there were then no lamps in existence, men and boys attended with flambeaux to light people across the fields to the nearest streets of Islington, Clerkenwell, and Gray's Inn Lane ; and that it was

[1] Act i. sc. ii.

quite common for groups to assemble before crossing the fields for the sake of company and protection.[1]

Bagnigge Wells was another celebrated spa in the north of London, and its site, together with that of its tea-gardens, where debauchery was openly carried on to an extent not now conceivable, has long been occupied by the King's Cross Road. William Woty, in a collection of his poetical effusions entitled 'Shrubs of Parnassus,' published in 1760, calls this spa 'a Dome Superb,' while Madam Fupock, in the prologue to George Colman's 'Bon Ton,' published in 1778, is made to specify as one among the joys of London life that of

> drinking tea on summer's afternoons,
> At Bagnigge Wells with china and gilt spoons.

And the anonymous author of a poetical satire upon the spa, published three years later, describes its arbours and alcoves as places

> Where 'prenticed youths enjoy the Sunday feast,
> And city matrons boast their Sabbath rest,
> Where unfledged Templars first as fops parade,
> And new-made ensigns sport their first cockade.

The tea-garden attached to Bagnigge Wells was frequented, according to Place, by shopkeepers, heads of families, working-men, and apprentices, as much as Ranelagh and Vauxhall were by those whose means were greater.[2]

There were two mineral wells, situated, as Dr. John Bevis observes, in his 'Experimental Inquiry' concerning their contents, qualities, and medical virtues, 'a little way out of London, on the high road from Coppice Row, near Spa Fields.' One of these was the St. Chad's Well, or the Battle Bridge Wells, which stood at the bottom of the Gray's Inn Road, on the New Road leading from Islington to Tottenham Court, and now lies hidden beneath a passage close by the King's Cross Station of the Underground Railway.

From about 1750 onwards the celebrity of certain springs in the vicinity of Acton, a small hamlet situated about five

[1] P. 103.

[2] See a very curious account of Bagnigge Wells at this time among the *Place MSS. Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* ii. p. 79.

miles from the metropolis on the Oxford Road, attracted large numbers of potent and impotent folk. Daniel Lysons, in the notice of this spot in his 'Environs of London,' states that the waters of the springs were considered by competent authorities to partake of a nature 'more strongly cathartic than any other in the kingdom of the same quality, except those of Cheltenham.' How far this was so cannot now be said, but an assembly room was erected close at hand, and for a period of nearly forty years both East Acton and Friar's Place, a small adjacent hamlet, were thronged during the summer season 'with valetudinarians and idle people, allured by the hope of remedy or tempted by the love of dissipation.' Acton Wells continued to be patronised until about 1780, when they ran dry and were consequently forsaken.[1]

While digging a well in the rear of 'a noted house of good entertainment, known as the Green Man,' which lay about a mile beyond the village of Dulwich, in the autumn of 1739, a chalybeate spring was discovered which became so immensely popular, that the proprietor, as a pamphlet of the time remarks, 'built a handsome room on one end of his bowling green for breakfasts, dancing, and entertainments; a part of the fashionable luxury of the present age which every village for ten miles round London has something of.' On a slope of the hill between Dulwich and the neighbouring hamlet of Sydenham stood Sydenham Wells, which were also much resorted to.[2]

Turning now to the provincial spas, the first one that shall be selected for notice is Epsom, which enjoyed no small share of public favour during the first quarter of the eighteenth century on account of the repute of its springs. There can be little doubt that its prosperity would have lasted much longer than it did, had it not been for the ill-advised conduct of a certain John Livingstone, an apothecary, who in 1706 purchased a piece of land in the town, and having sunk a well, erected upon it a large house with an assembly room for dancing and music; and other rooms for raffling, dicing, fair chance, and all sorts of gaming; besides shops for milliners, jewellers,

[1] *Brewer and Brayley;* Lysons's *Environs of London*, ii. 1, 2.
[2] Lysons's *Environs of London*, i. 86, 87.

and toymen. By means of concerts, balls, routs, and other little diversions, Livingstone contrived to allure the nobility and ladies of the court, who frequented the old well, to his own establishment, and in 1727 managed to get the lease of the old well and locked it up. The visitors were not long in finding out that the waters of 'the New Well' did not possess the healing virtues of the old one, and all with one accord began to desert the spot. Fish, flesh, and fowl were brought by the higglers to the doors of the visitors every morning. The town was provided with two bowling greens, raffling shops, and a music stand. The beaux sauntered about in their gowns at the Wells or played at bowls, and after dinner the company either rode out on the downs, or took coach to the ring; at night they either played cards and raffled in the Long Rooms, or got drunk at the only tavern which the place afforded. John Macky noted that in 1722, the date of his visit, the town of Epsom was swarming 'with that vermin called sharpers.'

Public favour was wont to bestow itself in large measure upon the several chalybeate springs in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge in Kent. From Peter Causton's poetical epistle entitled 'Tunbridgealia,' from John Macky's record of his 'Touring through England,' and from numerous other sources, we are in a position to form a fairly accurate idea of the way in which visitors to Tunbridge passed their time. We know, for example, that the season commenced towards the latter end of May, and terminated shortly after Michaelmas. We also know that the visitors were in the habit of getting up with the sun, and of drinking at the spring, and after this to take a turn in the walks, which were usually 'crowded with gay and glittering company.' Those of a more serious frame of mind attended morning prayers at one of the numerous proprietary chapels. Breakfast was then taken either in public or in private. The remainder of the morning was passed either in social converse on the Pantiles, a sort of long covered parade, at the public rooms, at the coffee-house, or in the bookseller's shop. The ladies visited the raffles, or tattled silks and scandal at the milliner's and the turner's establishments; young fops were in

the habit of making copies of verses to the fair sex in general, or to some particular fair one, and entering them for everybody's inspection in a book kept expressly for that purpose at the shop of the principal bookseller. After dinner the company paraded in full dress up and down the Pantiles till tea-time. Two evenings in each week (Tuesday and Friday) were set apart for balls. Card-parties and assemblies took place every other night except Sunday. Carriage exercise, cricket, horse-racing (the charge for admission to which was half a crown for each gentleman and one shilling for each lady) completed the list of amusements in which the fashionable and gallant of both sexes indulged. Collections were ordinarily made among the visitors for a clergyman to perform the service of the Church of England twice each day, and for the delivery of sermons on the seventh day by such ecclesiastical dignitaries as visited the Wells. Small subscriptions were customarily given to the sweepers of the walks and the female water-dippers. A newspaper writer detailing Tunbridge life in 1767 states that

on your first arrival, nay, even on the road, you are *toutéd* by all the bakers, butchers, brewers, grocers, tavern-keepers, water-dippers, &c. &c., and on the first morning, before you are well awake, by the music, to whom I find, besides a small present for thus disturbing you, every family and single gentleman subscribe from half a crown to half a guinea, for which they play in a gallery built for that purpose facing the great rooms on the walks, three times every day.

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, a fashionable lady of the eighteenth century, was deeply attached to Tunbridge Wells.

Why hesitate about going to Tunbridge Wells? (inquires she of one of her correspondents). The waters are good, the air incomparable, the place agreeable; and you cannot make a better summer's campaign. Rural and polite life are happily associated here; you may have the most retired or the most public walks, as you are disposed; the variety of persons and characters makes Tunbridge an epitome of the world.

Writing from Tunbridge Wells to the Duchess of Portland under date of October 27, 1745, she says :—

Here are Hungarians, Italians, French, Portuguese, Irish, and Scotch. Then we have a great many Jews, with worse countenances than their friend Pontius Pilate in a bad tapestry hanging.

In opposition to these unbelievers we have the very believing Roman Catholics, and to contrast with these ceremonious religionists we have the quaint puritans and rigid presbyterians. I never saw a worse collection of human creatures in all my life.[1]

Writing in 1749, she says :—

In many respects this place is inferior to the Bath, in some it is better. We are not confined here in streets ; the houses are scattered irregularly, and Tunbridge Wells looks, from the window I now sit by, a little like the village you see from our terrace at Sandleford, only that the inhabitants, instead of Jack and Joan, are my lord and lady,

In August 1761 Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, the learned translator of Epictetus, was one among the numerous visitors to Tunbridge Wells. Writing to her friend Miss Talbot, she says :—

Every day since I received your letters I have been wishing to thank you for them, my dear Miss Talbot ; but two public breakfasts, two days' excursion into Sussex, one fit and a half of the headache, the making up four dozen of franks, and then falling violently in love with the man who signed them, you must allow to be such a series of employments as, added to the ordinary routine of a Tunbridge life, could leave me but very little leisure for any other occupation. Our excursion to Hastings, about thirty miles from hence, was very delightful ; and I thought much the more so, as we left all the good company on the Pantiles behind us, and I had Mrs. Montagu entirely to myself.[2]

But the most fashionable English Helicon of the eighteenth century was unquestionably Bath. If the testimony of Suetonius may be credited, the Emperor Octavius Augustus Cæsar was accustomed to boast that he found the Eternal City of brick, and that he left it of marble. Doubtless that extraordinary character Richard Beau Nash, the king of Bladud's ancient city, were he now to revisit it in the glimpses of the moon, would feel constrained to make a similar boast from the fact he was instrumental in infusing such an element of elegance and refinement into its social life after his advent in the early part of the eighteenth century. The history of the great change which Nash succeeded in effecting is so interesting that it tempts to a digression.

[1] *Letters*, iii. 8, 9. [2] Pennington's *Memoirs of Mrs. Carter*, i. 228.

Early in 1703 the delicate state of Queen Anne's health induced the court physicians to advise her to try the effects of the thermal springs of Bath. She acted upon their advice, and her single visit did more to enhance the reputation of the waters than a century of advertising would have done, since after this date fashionable folk began to resort thither in shoals from all parts of the country, greatly to the profit of the local Galens and lodging-house keepers. But what, it may be asked, was the condition of the good city of Bath at the time? Much the same as it was when Queen Elizabeth visited it more than a hundred years previously; very unlovely, to say the least. Goldsmith describes it from personal knowledge as 'mean and contemptible, no elegant buildings, no open streets nor uniform squares.' It is true that for the accommodation of the nobility there were two hostelries—the Abbey House and Westgate House; but the nature of the accommodation provided for ordinary visitors may be best summed up in the words of that authority who has been just cited, 'paltry though expensive, the dining-rooms and other chambers were floored with boards coloured brown with soot and small beer to hide the dirt; the walls were covered with unpainted wainscot, the furniture corresponded with the meanness of the architecture.' We are told, moreover, that the pump-house lacked a director, and that it was next to impossible for either ladies or gentlemen to walk home at night without being grossly insulted by the sedan chairmen. The chief place of resort was a bowling green, the chief promenade a double row of sycamore trees, and the chief amusements of the gay and fashionable company found expression in eating and drinking, yawning and gambling.

But this order of things was destined soon to change and give place to a new one. A very eminent member of that profession which is 'punctually paid for lengthening out disease,' who flourished in Bath at this period, suddenly took it into his head that his merits had not received from its denizens that recognition which in his own opinion they deserved. Nothing on the discovery of this fact, either would or could appease his wrath, which openly manifested itself, by a series of savage

attacks upon the efficacy of the thermal springs in which the locality abounded. To crown all, he published a pamphlet charged with vituperation and abuse from beginning to end, which he confidently assured the local tradespeople would have the effect of 'casting a toad into the springs,' or, in other words, of precipitating the downfall of the high estimation in which they were universally held, and thereby hastening their ruin.

Now it happened that on the very day this ill-omened pamphlet was published, the London stage-coach deposited at the door of Westgate House, a crowd of invalids and people 'of quality,' among whom was a broken-down gamester, who, knowing that the English and continental sharpers were in the habit of fixing their headquarters in Bath during the autumn season, had arrived there with the object of trying his fortune at the numerous gaming tables in which the city abounded. By this time the pamphlet to which reference has been made had cast quite a gloom over the city. On all sides the newcomer heard shopkeepers and innkeepers alike giving expression to the grave apprehensions which they entertained for their future prospects. In him, however, they found no sympathy. He not only ridiculed their fears, but had the assurance to declare that if the inhabitants would depute to him alone the task of superintending the public amusements of the city, he would guarantee in a very short space of time to expel 'the toad,' after the manner in which it was commonly asserted that the Italians had cured the poison of the tarantola, namely, through the agency of music. Who was he that spoke thus? None other than an eccentric, extravagant spendthrift, who rejoiced in the name of Richard Nash, whom the townsfolk, strange as it may seem, took at his word, invested with supreme authority over all the public amusements, and, in short, constituted the monarch of the place.

The first act of the master of the ceremonies on assuming the duties of his office was to draw up a code of rules, and to cause it to be conspicuously displayed in the pump-room. These rules were eleven in number, and ran to the following effect :—

1. That a visit of ceremony at first coming, and another at going away, are all that can be expected or desired by ladies of quality and fashion, except impertinents.

2. That ladies coming to the ball appoint a time for their footmen coming to wait on them home, to prevent disturbance and inconveniences to themselves and others.

3. That gentlemen of fashion, never appearing in the morning before the ladies in gowns and caps, shew breeding and respect.

4. That no person take it ill that any one goes to another's play or breakfast, and not theirs—except captious by nature.

5. That no gentleman give his ticket for the balls to any but gentlewomen. N.B. Unless he has none of his acquaintance.

6. That gentlemen crowding before the ladies at the ball shew ill-manners, and that none do so for the future—except such as respect nobody but themselves.

7. That no gentleman or lady takes it ill that another dances before them—except such as have no pretence to dance at all.

8. That the elder ladies and children be content with a second bench at the ball, as being past or not come to perfection.

9. That the younger ladies take notice how many eyes observe them.

10. That all whisperers of lies and scandal be taken for their authors.

11. That all repeaters of such lies and scandal be shunn'd by all company—except such as have been guilty of the same crime.

N.B. Several men of no character, old women and young ones of questioned reputation, are great authors of lies in these places, being of the sect of levellers.

How stern a discipline was required in order to teach our forefathers of what it was once the fashion to call 'the Augustan age' good manners, this code of rules shows only too plainly, and the strange part of the matter is, that the generation of hooped petticoats and laced cravats received it 'with sympathetic approbation.'

Nash's next reform was in the direction of that singular rusticity which the belles of the early Georgian era were so fond of assuming, and this he accomplished by manifesting unmistakable signs of his aversion to the white aprons (which were then commonly worn even by those of the highest rank), on the ground that their use rendered it impossible to discern the difference between countesses and dairymaids. 'Example,' thought Nash to himself, 'is better than precept.' One evening the Duchess of Queensberry entered the assembly room wearing a white apron. Straightway the master of the ceremonies walked

up to her ladyship, and after remonstrating with her upon its ineligibility, snatched it off and flung it among the ladies' maids sitting on the back benches ; observing as he did so, 'None but Abigails ever appear in white aprons !' It is gratifying to record that the duchess exhibited her good sense by accepting Nash's hasty censure with a pleasant smile accompanied by a curtsey.

The irregularities of the gentlemen had now to be summarily dealt with. The use of the sword among them was far too frequent to be pleasant—all disputes, whether arising from love affairs or 'play,' being customarily settled by recourse to it. Nash was determined that it should be so no longer. Whenever, therefore, he heard that a challenge had been given. or accepted, he invariably issued orders to the city magistrates to have both parties arrested. Duels, in consequence, soon became of very rare occurrence in the city. Another gross breach of propriety then very prevalent speedily exhibited the value of Nash's rule. He had long striven to persuade the boorish country squires to make their appearance at the balls and assemblies habited in shoes and stockings. They persisted, however, in repairing thither wearing riding habits and top boots. Finding that all his persuasions proved futile, Nash resorted to ridicule and penned the following stanzas :—

*Frontinella's Invitation to the Assembly.*

Come one and all to Hoyden Hall,
For there's the assembly this night ;
None but prude fools
Mind manners and rules,
We Hoydens do decency slight.

Come trollops and slatterns,
Cockt hats and white aprons,
This best our modesty suits.
For why should not we
In dress be as free
As Hogs Norton squires in boots.

It cannot be said that this arrow from the bow of Apollo was a very barbed one, albeit it found mark in the breast of not a few of those for whom it was intended. A musical composer having set the words to a very lively tune, caused it

to become not only a great favourite, but to be sung and whistled all over the city; and as many of the nobility assured the author that his verses 'did honour to the age,' the wearing of top-boots in the assembly rooms became a somewhat formidable experiment for the future. But the master of the ceremonies was not altogether satisfied at the progress of this particular reform, and so with the object of stamping out the abuse more effectually, he went to the length of hiring a puppet show, wherein Punch made his appearance in a drawing-room (booted and spurred after the manner of country squires) for the purpose of paying his addresses to the object of his affections. 'You must get rid of those boots, Sir,' the fair one was made sternly to observe, 'or quit my presence.' 'My boots!' exclaimed Punch in utter astonishment; 'why, madam, you may as well bid me pull off my legs. I never go without boots, I never ride, I never dance without them; and this piece of politeness is quite the thing at Bath. We always dance at our town in boots, and the ladies often make minuets in riding-hoods.' The fair one was deaf to all these arguments, and finding her remonstrances useless, kicked Squire Punch from her presence. This droll was the means of completely effecting what Nash's *jeu d'esprit* had only half succeeded in effecting. Rare indeed, now, were the occasions on which top-boots intruded themselves into the assemblies; but when such happened to be the case Nash lost no time in bowing to the delinquent and expressing his regret 'that the gentleman had forgotten his horse.'

The attention of Nash was next drawn to the insolence of the Irish chairmen by whom the city was overrun. His highness soon brought these fellows to their senses by compelling them all to take out licences on pain of instant dismissal. It was represented that, with but very few exceptions, the accommodation provided for visitors was so bad it could not possibly be worse, and that the charges of the lodging-house keepers were beyond measure exorbitant. Reformation was speedily effected by the institution of a tariff.

What the consequences of these admirable regulations were may be easily divined. Bath, by the time George I. ascended the throne, was a synonym for decency, order, and decorum,

so far as outward appearances were concerned, and not more thickly did the leaves fall in Vallombrosa than did valetudinarians arrive in the city of the waters to renew the fountains of life by drawing freely on the springs of *le salut* or *la santé*, or to exudate the ill-humours of the gaming or the dining table by plunging into the sudatory baths. Passengers set out from London in coaches which left at seven o'clock in the morning, jumbled their occupants black and blue during a day and a half and an intervening night, as George Colman the younger once remarked, and generally arrived, 'by the blessing of God,' some time during the course of the third day. Long before the coaches reached their destination, they were besieged by bands of touters (in league with doctors and nurses), who lauded and magnified the virtues of their employers, and besought even with tears the 'insides' and 'outsides' to bestow their patronage upon them. The numbers increased daily, and the ever-watchful eye of Nash soon perceived that the ramshackle booth denominated the assembly room, wherein the company varied their dances to the sound of the fiddle and the hautboy, with the indulgence of their gambling predilections, would not be able to hold even a third of them. The recognition of this fact sealed the fate of the old assembly room. An architect of the city named Harrison was ordered to demolish it, and to erect a more capacious building upon its site. This was accordingly done, a handsome structure being speedily reared, for the use of which, and for the lighting of which, Harrison was paid a weekly rent of three guineas. The band of music which it had been the first care of Nash to engage and to make the citizens support, was still further augmented, and gardens were laid out in the rear of the rooms, in order that fashionable folk might be provided with a fashionable promenade.

Order being the first law of this monarch of manners every event, no matter how trivial, every amusement, however insignificant, was by him well regulated. All people of rank and condition were greeted immediately on their arrival by a merry peal of the abbey bells, and subsequently by a serenade from the city band—the regulation fee for this ranging from half a

guinea to half a crown. All heads of families were expected to subscribe to the places of amusement. To the assemblies and the pump-room, two guineas; for the privilege of walking in the gardens attached to the assembly rooms, any sum between half a guinea and half a crown; another 'trifling' subscription to the coffee-houses, for the use of the writing materials therein supplied (correspondence at this time being ordinarily transacted at these resorts); and to complete the tale a 'trifling' subscription of half a guinea to the circulating library.

Under the new regulations, visitors of both sexes were required to begin the day with a plunge into one of the five baths at some time between six and nine, at which hour the janitor opened the doors of the pump-room, wherein everybody assembled to gossip and to drink the waters, which nothing but the most amazing insensibility to foulness of both taste and smell, or the fear of approaching dissolution, could have induced them to taste a second time. It is perhaps worth recording that while the company were drinking their nauseous draughts, a band of noisy musicians thundered away in the gallery above, doubtless on the same principle that the aid of music was brought in at the sacrifices of Moloch, in order to drown the shrieks of the victims. The morning being disposed of in this manner, varied on the seventh day by attendance at the services of the Abbey, or at one of the proprietary chapels, the visitors sought health and exercise either in the promenades, in excursions, or in sauntering through the streets of the town; the *virtuosi* turned over the newest works in the booksellers' shops, the poets sought inspiration on the banks of the Avon, and the sentimental damsels and their lovers sought the silence or the sleep which Wordsworth assures us is to be found among the lonely hills. At four o'clock all sat down to dinner, after which they dressed for the assembly or the playhouse, both of which commenced punctually at six. On Tuesday and Friday evenings, in each week there was a public ball at which everyone who could was expected to attend. Dancing commenced precisely at six, and ended precisely at eleven. Each ball was opened by a minuet—the lady and gentleman of highest rank dancing the first. At its conclusion the lady was

conducted to her seat, and then Nash led up another lady, all gentlemen present being required to dance two minuets. At eight o'clock minuets gave place to country dances; an hour later the ladies were led by the gentlemen to tea; and on returning dancing was resumed till the clock struck eleven, when Nash, advancing to the centre of the room, held up his forefinger as a signal for the band to cease playing. That instant the ball terminated, and the gentlemen began to escort the ladies to their sedan chairs. No deviation was ever made by Nash from these rules, and as an instance of his inflexibility on this point it may be mentioned that when the Princess Amelia, sister of George III., was sojourning in Bath, she requested him one evening to permit 'just one more dance' after he had given the usual signal for the company to disperse. But the master of the ceremonies turned a deaf ear even to the entreaties of royalty, courteously assuring her Royal Highness that his laws, like those of the Medes and Persians, would admit of neither exceptions nor modifications without the entire subversion of his authority.[1] As soon as Nash had ascended the throne of Bladonia, he took good care to make his appearance in public in every way worthy of his high station. He always disported a huge white cocked hat, and when questioned as to the reason why he did so, he would naïvely reply, 'to secure it from being stolen;' a flowing periwig of huge dimensions surmounted his head, ruffles of the finest Mechlin lace graced his hands, and shoes adorned with exquisite buckles his feet. Whenever he travelled to Tunbridge Wells, where he occupied a position similar to that at Bath, it was in a chariot drawn by six greys, and attended with laced lacqueys, outriders, couriers, and every other appendage of ostentation and display.

The question now arises, by what means was all this supported, seeing that Nash entered Bath in the guise of a needy adventurer? The answer is that it was supported mainly by his heavy winnings at the hazard and lansquenet tables, and if the evil whispers of the times may be credited, by highway

[1] Goldsmith, *Life of Nash*, p. 36.

robbery. Bath, as we have already seen, was at this time the El Dorado of hundreds of professional gamesters, English and foreign, as well as of hundreds who were not gamesters in any sense of the word, but who nevertheless had unlimited cash at their disposal and a predilection for deep play. With Nash, gambling was the one master passion which swallowed up all the rest. It had led him into his early embarrassments, it had remained with him unchecked all through the changes and chances of his life, and during his sojourn at Bath it blazed up more fiercely than ever. His excuse was that he had exhausted his private means through his new style of living. The gamblers and gambling of Bath attracted at last the attention of the legislature, which in the twelfth year of the reign of George II. enacted heavy penalties on all games of chance, particularly basset, faro, and hazard. Such games were declared by the Act to be illegal, and a fine of two hundred pounds was levied on all 'setters up of the banks,' and a fine of fifty pounds on each player. What followed? That which deservedly attends the failure on the part of legislators to recognize that a tendency to gamble is an inherent part of human nature; of the desire of gain without taking difficult steps; and that enactments against it only whet the appetite and increase the evil they seek to remove—complete evasion of the law. All sorts of games with ridiculous names were invented by the dexterous sharpers —'passages,' 'rolypoly,' 'Marlborough's battles,' and 'E. O.,' which last ultimately became the popular favourite, and no wonder, when it is remembered that the profits of the 'banks' were two and a half per cent. on all sums lost or won. Bath was now literally a city of gamesters and cheats, and as instancing the assiduity with which they plied their craft on Nash alone, it is said that he discovered that in the space of three years he had been fleeced to the extent of something like twenty thousand pounds. But the legislators of that age would not learn wisdom. In 1745 Parliament enacted that all houses or rooms opened for gambling should be forfeited. Subsequently it was enacted that no player should be exempt from examination as a witness; that all who frequented the gaming tables should be liable to be summoned by the magistrates;

that all players who lost ten guineas at a time should be indicted within six months, and be fined on conviction five times the amount of their losses or winnings. What effect had these stringent measures? None whatever; the law was evaded hourly, and gambling continued to flourish like a green bay tree.

Were it not for the comfort of returning health (wrote the Earl of Chesterfield from Bath to Lady Suffolk, under date of November 14, 1737), I believe I should hang myself; I am so weary of sauntering about without knowing what to do, or of playing at low play, which I hate, for the sake of avoiding high, which I love.[1]

This is a slightly different song to that sung by William Pulteney on December 6, 1735, in the ears of the Hon. George Berkeley, to the following tune :—

On Friday next we leave this place; an unlucky one for me, for I have lost between five and six hundred pounds at it. Would it was to be paid, like the Jew's of Venice, with flesh instead of money. I think I could spare some pounds of that without any detriment.[2]

The ladies gambled as much as the gentlemen, and a contemporary satirist states that they chiefly resorted to hazard, lansquenet, and loo. He found that these 'industrious creatures,' as he humorously styles them, made it

A rule
To secure half the fish while they manage the pool,
So they win, to be sure, yet I very much wonder
Why they put so much money the candlestick under,
For up comes a man on a sudden, slap-dash,
Snuffs the candles, and carries away all the cash,
And as nobody troubles their heads any more,
I'm in very great hopes that it goes to the poor.[3]

It is stated that in the spring of the year 1760 subscriptions were opened in Bath for 'prayers at the abbey' and 'gaming at the rooms.' At the close of the first day it was ascertained that the number of those who had subscribed for prayers was twelve, for gaming sixty-seven, a circumstance which inspired a wit to pen the following epigram :—

[1] *Countess of Suffolk's Corr.* ii. 163–4. *Ibid.* p. 148.
[2] Christopher Anstey, *The New Bath Guide.*

The Church and Rooms the other day
Open'd their books for prayer and play,
The priest got *twelve*, Hoyle *sixty-seven* ;
How great the odds for h— 'gainst heaven !

Under the sway of Anne and the first George, Bath became the most pleasurable city in the kingdom for at least five months out of the twelve, and all the world and his wife, to use a familiar expression, journeyed thither to be made whole as thickly as men of old were 'wont to sail to Anticyra for helleborus.' The fashionable fops, the belles, the tattle, the public amusements, the scandal, and the sectarian cant and hypocrisy, one and all found a severe censor in the person of Christopher Anstey, who satirised them unmercifully in his mock-humorous poem, 'The New Bath Guide,' which appeared in 1766, purporting to be a collection of letters written by a family during their residence in the city. Some of the descriptions contained in this poem are remarkably well written. Take as a specimen the following lines, in which a romantic young lady dilates upon the absurd custom of welcoming the arrival of every stranger by a peal of the abbey bells :—

No city, dear mother, this city excels,
For charming sweet sounds, both of fiddles and bells,
I thought, like a fool, that they only would ring,
For a wedding, or judge, or the birth of a king,
But I found 'twas for me that the goodnatured people
Rang so hard that I thought they would pull down the steeple,
So I took out my purse, as I hate to be shabby,
And paid all the men when they came from the abbey.[1]

Take, again, the description of the bathers contained in Letter VI. :—

Oh, 'twas pretty to see them all put on their flannels,
And then take the water like so many spaniels,
And though all the while it grew hotter and hotter,
They swam just as if they were hunting an otter ;
'Twas a glorious sight to behold the fair sex
All wading with gentlemen up to their necks,
And view them so prettily tumble and sprawl
In a great smoking kettle as big as our hall ;
And to-day many persons of rank and condition,
Were boiled by command of an able physician.

[1] Letter V.

Lastly, take the description of a public breakfast contained in Letter XIII. :—

'Twas pretty to see how like birds of a feather,
The people of quality flocked all together ;
All pressing, addressing, caressing, and fond,
Just the same as those animals are in a pond :
You've read all their names in the News, I suppose,
But for fear you have not, take the list as it goes.
There was Lady Greasewrister
And Madam Van-Twister,
Her ladyship's sister,
Lord Cram and Lord Vulter,
Sir Brandish O'Culter,
With Marshal Carouzer,
And old Lady Mowzer.
And the great Hanoverian Baron Pausmowzer,
Besides many others, who all in the rain went,
On purpose to honour this grand entertainment.
The company made a most brilliant appearance,
And ate bread and butter with great perseverance ;
All the chocolate too, that my lord set before 'em,
The ladies despatch'd with the utmost decorum,
Soft musical numbers were heard all around,
The horns and the clarions echoing sound.

The following lines, which occur in Letter XV., speak for themselves :—

A sum, my dear mother, far heavier yet,
Captain Cormorant won when I learn'd lansquenet ;
Two hundred I paid him, and five am in debt.
For the five I had nothing to do but to write,
For the captain was very well bred and polite,
And took, as he saw my expenses were great,
My bond to be paid on the Clodpole estate,
And asks nothing more, while the money is lent,
Than interest paid him at twenty per cent.

Several particulars of social life at Bath are to be gleaned from Smollett's novel of 'Humphry Clinker,' which was written and published five years after Anstey's 'New Bath Guide,' which it may almost be said to have reduced to prose. The visitors rose about eight o'clock in the morning and proceeded negligently attired to drink the waters at the pump-room, which was crowded like a Welsh fair with the highest quality and the lowest grades, while a band of noisy musicians thundered away in the gallery. The pumper, with his wife and

servant, attended within a bar, and glasses of different sizes stood ranged in order before them, so that the visitors had nothing to do but to point at the one required. Goldsmith, in his 'Life of Beau Nash,' states that three glasses, at three different times, was the usual portion for each drinker, and that the intervals between each glass were enlivened 'by the harmony of a small band of music.' The hours for bathing were between eight and nine. Ladies were brought in a close chair, and, on stepping into the bath, were presented each with 'a little floating dish like a basin,' into which they put a pocket handkerchief, a snuffbox, and a nosegay. They then traversed the bath, after which they called for their chairs and returned home to their lodgings. Underneath the pump-room was the King's Bath, a huge cistern where patients might be seen up to their necks in hot water. In close proximity to the pump-room stood a coffee-house, where politics, scandal, and philosophy were daily discussed. Other 'charming places of resort' were the booksellers' shops, where novels, plays, pamphlets, and newspapers might be perused 'for so small a subscription as a crown a quarter,' and Mr. Gill's, the pastrycook's, where the company never failed 'to stop and take a jelly, a tart, or a small basin of vermicelli.' Alternately, each evening, the company met at the two public rooms, to drink tea in private parties and to play cards. Those who were afflicted with gout and rheumatism were transported from place to place in so many boxes of wet leather.' Readers of 'Humphry Clinker' will remember that that sour old gentleman, Matthew Bramble, in one of his chapters of lamentation to Dr. Lewis, states that he gave up drinking the waters because, after a long conversation with the physician who attended him respecting the construction of the pump and cistern in the pump-room, he became convinced 'that the patients in the pump-room quaffed the scourings of the bathers.' As soon as this dreadful fact had dawned upon him, he states that he transferred his patronage to a spring that supplied the private baths on the Abbey Green. Perceiving something extraordinary in the taste of these, he made strict inquiries, and found that the Roman baths in that particular

quarter of the city were covered with an old burying ground formerly belonging to the abbey! Whether Smollett was embodying the results of his own experience it is impossible to say; but that the undertaker's craft was one which flourished in the city is beyond all question true. So many found a last resting-place within its walls that a witty local physician, Dr. Henry Harington, on beholding the interior of the venerable abbey, felt constrained to observe:

> These walls, adorned with monument and bust,
> Show how Bath waters serve to lay the *dust.*

Strange, too, as it may seem, in a place where water alone was the cure for all distempers, the people who thrived most in Bath were doctors and gamesters. The former was a race mainly dependent on the nurses, who, in turn, were mainly dependent upon them. This is brought out with his accustomed poignancy by Anstey, when causing a young lady to describe a consultation of physicians in Letter IV., who remarks:—

> And so as I grew ev'ry day worse and worse,
> The doctor advised me to send for a nurse,
> And the nurse was so willing my health to restore,
> She begged me to send for a few doctors more,
> For when any difficult work's to be done,
> Many heads can despatch it much better than one.

Beau Nash died at his residence, St. John's Court, in Bath, in February 1761, deeply regretted, and was buried with great solemnity within the precincts of the abbey. For a long time after this even the visitors to the city could not make up their minds in the choice of a successor. At length they resolved to elect a master of the ceremonies without delay. Voting ended in the election of two such functionaries, and a violent disturbance arose in consequence. The partisans of the rival candidates, who were principally of the fair sex, came from words to blows, and the election terminated with the very unedifying spectacle of the ladies pulling each other's noses and tearing off caps, head-dresses and petticoats.

> Pins and pomatum strewed the room,
> Emitting many a strange perfume.

and not until the Riot Act had been read no fewer than three successive times did the fury and the violence of the fair combatants abate. Similar disturbances marked the election which took place on the death of Samuel Derrick in 1769.

The poet Gay, writing from Bath in 1724 to Mrs. Howard, says :—

The talk of the Bath is the marriage of Lord Somerville and Mrs. Rolt. She left the Bath yesterday (he continues), but is to go away to-day or to-morrow ; but as opinions differ, I cannot decide whether they are married or no. Lord Essex gives a private ball in Harrison's great room to Mrs. Pelham this evening ; so that in all probability, some odd bodies being left out, we shall soon have the pleasure of being divided into factions. I shall return to London with Lord Scarborough, who hath not as yet fixed his time of leaving the Bath. Lord Fitzwilliam this morning had an account that a ticket of hers was come up to 500*l.* Lady Fitzwilliam wonders she has not heard from you, and has so little resolution that she cannot resist buttered rolls at breakfast, though she knows they prejudice her health.[1]

Lady Hervey, writing from Bath to Mrs. Howard under date of June 7, 1725, informs her that

We had a breakfast on Saturday, given by Mr. Byng, at which I believe there were at least fifty or three score people. Sir Richard Grosvenor gives one to-morrow. At night we have constantly four or five tables at cards, and hazard has not failed once, so that take it altogether we make a very pretty show for the time of year.

I came to this place but yesterday (wrote Lord John Hervey from Bath to his friend Lady Wortley Montagu, on October 8, 1728), from which you may imagine I am not yet sufficiently qualified to execute the commission you gave me, which was to send you a list of the sojourners and inmates of this place ; but there is so universal an affinity and resemblance among these individuals that a small paragraph will serve amply to illustrate what you have to depend upon. The Duchess of Marlborough, Congreve, and Lady Rich are the only people whose faces I know, the rest are a swarm of wretched beings, some with half their limbs, some with none, the ingredients of Pandora's box *personifié*, who stalk about, half-living remnants of mortality, and by calling themselves human ridicule the species more than Swift's Yahoos.[2]

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[1] *Letters of the Countess of Suffolk*, ed. Croker, i. 177.

[2] *Letters and Works of Lady M. W. Montagu*, ed. Thomas, ii. 14, 15.

Among the manuscripts in the possession of the Earl of Dartmouth, preserved at Patshull House, Wolverhampton, there is one from the Earl of Orrery to Lady Kaye, dated Bath, November 3, 1731. He says :—

This place begins to thin (though I shall not diminish the number till January 3). It has never been very full of the first rank, and though our rooms are so crowded as even to make them uneasy to breathe in, the group of people consists of those that neither know nor are known. Lord Peterborough has been here for a few days, but in his journey hither lost all his shirts, so that his lordship was obliged to some of his acquaintance for clean linen during his residence at the Bath. . . . A duel that has been fought lately, between one Johnes, a gamester, and one Mr. Price (a gentleman's son but of the same profession too), has put us in great confusion. Price is killed and Jonas has made his escape. In the general there has been no high play, and your ladyship knows that raffles, toyshops, and puppet shows flourish, of course. Nash seems dejected and oppressed at heart ; I suppose he has not yet recovered his losses of last year. Among our beauties Lady Bab Mansell (at least according to my poor taste) bears the bell. There are, indeed, many others who make conspicuous figures at our public breakfasts.

The following letter from Lord Chesterfield to Lady Suffolk, dated November 2, 1734, pleasantly summarises the 'general history of the Bath' since her ladyship left it :—

October 27.—Little company appeared at the pump ; those that were there drank the waters of affliction for the departure of Lady Suffolk and Mrs. Blount. Amoretto (i.e. Hon. Robert Sawyer Herbert) went upon Lansdowne to evaporate his grief for the loss of his Parthenissa, in memory of whom (and the wind being very cold into the bargain) he tied his handkerchief over his hat, and looked very sadly. In the evening the usual tea-table met at Lyndsey's, the two principal persons excepted (i.e. Lady Suffolk and Patty Blount), who it was hoped were then got safe to Newberry. Amoretto's main action was at our table ; but, episodically, he took pieces of bread and butter, and cups of tea, at about ten others. He laughed his way through the girls out of the long room into the little one, where he tallied (i.e. played at cards) till he swore, and swore till he went home, and probably some time afterwards. The Countess of Burlington, in the absence of her Royal Highness, held a circle at Hayes's, where she lost a favourite snuff box, but unfortunately kept her temper. October 28.—Breakfast was at Lady Anne's, where Amoretto was with difficulty persuaded upon to eat and drink as much as he had a mind to. At night he was observed to be pleasant with the girls, and with less restraint than usual,

which made some people surmise that he comforted himself for the loss of Lady Suffolk and Parthenissa, by the liberty and impunity their absence gave him. October 29.—Amoretto breakfasted incognito, but appeared at the ball in the evening, where he distinguished himself by his *bon mots*. October 30.—Being his Majesty's birthday, little company appeared in the morning, all being resolved to look well at night. Mr. Herbert dined at Mrs. Walters's with young Mr. Barnard. Nash gave a ball at Lyndsey's, where Mrs. Tate appeared for the first time, and was noticed by Mr. Herbert. October 31.—Amoretto breakfasted at Lady Anne's, where being now more easy and familiar, he called for a half-peck loaf and a pound of butter. The Countess of Burlington bespoke the play as you see by the enclosed original bill; the audience consisted of seventeen souls, of whom I made one. November 1.—Amoretto, with a clear and excellent stomach, dined with me and went to the ball at eight, where Mrs. Hamilton chiefly engrossed him. November 2.—Mrs. Hamilton bespoke the play at night, which we all interested ourselves so much to fill, that there were as many people turned back as let in; it was so hot that the Countess of Burlington could not stay it out.[1]

The following letters constitute a bright and pleasant summary of the life at Bath of Mrs. Delany in October 1760:—

Sunday morning I was waked with the news of the king's death. Went to abbey church, attempted the pump-room—so crowded, no admittance; paid a visit to Lady Westmoreland. After church Lady Jekyll and her little sprite of a daughter came and spent the whole afternoon. . . . There was on Sunday a great tea-drinking in the rooms, and a bustle that would have startled me. Mr. Sloper, who is here with Madam Cibber and a daughter by her, has been much offended that his daughter was not taken out to dance; she was the first night, and a sensible clever woman, whose daughter was taken out after her, refused to let her dance; this put a stop to Mrs. Cibber's being asked again, and on Saturday night in the midst of the rooms, Mr. Cibber collared poor Collet, abusing him at the same time, and asking him if he had been the occasion of the affront put upon his daughter; he said it was 'by Mr. Nash's direction'—the poor wretch is *now* wheeled into the rooms; Mr. Cibber had some discourse with him and so the matter ended. Lady Weymouth comes here for a day or two on purpose to see me, and dines with us to-day. Crapes, bombazines, thick muslins, very broad hems; nothing else talked of. Fifteen hundred yards of crape sold at one shop on Sunday night, they say.[2]

Wednesday (says the same correspondent, writing on November 2, 1760), we dined at Lord Jersey's, and went to the rooms in the

[1] *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk*, ed. Croker, ii. 114–8.

[2] *Autob. and Corr.* 1st series, i. 607.

evening. I have been three times at the rooms with Lady Weymouth, and to-morrow she carries off me and Sally to Longleat, and we return on Wednesday. . . . We are now on the South Parade.

On the 8th she writes :—

I stayed at home all yesterday. Miss Smith and all the Vineys drank tea ; Miss Smith always in good-humour and agreeable, the Vineys all disconcerted. The dean brought Nancy home in the morning from the Pump and I made her stay all day, and sent to the rest to drink tea in the afternoon.

And on the 13th :—

I was at the Rooms last night with Miss Smith and Sally, and I gave them a snug tea-table in a corner : the rooms hot and thinning, I wish for balls as the quieter entertainment.[1]

Throughout the eighteenth century, Bath, notwithstanding its many rivals, continued to be regarded as 'the queen of watering places,' and the 'World,' so late as the year 1787, reminds its readers that 'not to have been at Bath is not *bon ton*.'

Visitors who got tired of the monotonous life of 'the Bath,' would often try the properties of the waters of a warm spring or fountain known as the Hotwell, at Bristol, about twelve miles distant. In the summer and autumn considerable numbers of families made Bristol and Clifton their residence for the benefit of drinking these waters, 'so beneficial and strengthening to the constitution.' The season at Bristol was passed in much the same way as it was at Bath. There were 'three sets of large, elegant, public rooms,' there were frequent public breakfasts during the week, and there were assemblies every Monday and Thursday alternately, in which the company went through the cotillon and country dance to perfection under the superintendence of a master of the ceremonies, who was always to be distinguished in the rooms by 'a medallion of gold and a ribbon,' which he invariably wore, and who never failed to impress the company with the propriety of attending 'with proper decorum,' to the set of eight rules, drawn up in imitation of those by which the Bath assemblies were regulated.

[1] *Autob. and Corr.* 1st series, iii. 607-14.

[2] The reader who seeks for further information of the life of Bath during the Georgian era should consult the *Literary Recollections of the Rev. Richard Warner*, ii. 3-64 ; and the recently published correspondence of Mrs. Osborn, the sister of the unfortunate Admiral Byng.

The Malvern Wells, although they possessed hardly any reputation, were not altogether unknown. A local physician, named Wall, first brought these waters into vogue. Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, the eminent bluestocking, who visited Malvern in 1757, says that there was then only one lodging-house in the town, and that this furnished accommodation for about fifteen people, to whom, once in each week, a public breakfast and dinner were given in the one large room which it contained. By particular invitation there were public tea-drinking and card-playing in the afternoons.[1]

One of the greatest rivals of the Bath waters were the chalybeate springs at Cheltenham, which as early as 1738 had been turned to good account by one Captain Henry Skillicorne, who built a room for the convenience of the water-drinkers, and protected the spring by erecting a square building with a dome over it, and laid out the paved court, formed walks, and spent much time and labour in endeavouring to improve the natural beauties of the locality. For a long time it was resorted to by a small knot of visitors, but in 1788 George III., in consequence of indisposition, was advised by Sir George Baker to drink the waters of Cheltenham on the spot. The Royal Family and their suite accordingly set out, and arrived at Cheltenham on July 12, 1786. Frances Burney, who afterwards became Madame d'Arblay, formed one of the party, and has recorded in her 'Diary' some amusing particulars respecting the inconveniences to which the king and other members of the Royal Family were subjected on the occasion of their visit. Cheltenham, we are told, at that time consisted mainly of one long street, and it had been arranged that 'the Royals,' as Miss Burney speaks of them, should occupy Fauconberg Hall during their stay. The apartments in which they were quartered were so confined that their occupants were barely able to turn themselves round in them, a house in the town had to be taken for several of the servants, the pages were compelled to sleep in outhouses, and the housemaids to lodge a quarter of a mile or more from the Hall. We are further told that the Royal Family were obliged to take all their meals in one small room,

[1] *Letters*, iv. 53-6.

and that, when the Duke of York came down from London on a flying visit to 'his fond father,' a portable wooden house had to be moved up from the far end of the town, and joined to Fauconberg Hall—a task which employed twenty or thirty men—because there was no room in the Hall itself.[1] Notwithstanding all these inconveniences, the king's health materially improved by the waters, and his example was followed by many of his subjects, particularly the Irish nobility and gentry, who resorted to the spot in such numbers between the date of King George's visit and 1797 that serious fears were at one time entertained lest the water supply should have proved inadequate to meet the excessive demand.

During the eighteenth century the baths in the town of Buxton in Derbyshire were frequently visited by invalids, although the accommodation for visitors was not by any means perfect. The baths were five in number, and the usual season for resorting to them was from the beginning of April to the beginning of November. The common amusements were, in the morning, taking the air and sometimes hunting, in the evening plays and dancing. Buxton was not much frequented till the second half of the century. The number of visitors increased between 1790 and 1796, when the Duke of Devonshire, who had erected stables in the town, rendered its attractions complete by the construction of 'a range of buildings in the form of a crescent,' and by laying out a number of walks, besides otherwise beautifying and adorning the town. Rheumatism and palsy were the ailments from which those who came to the thermal waters of Buxton chiefly suffered, and the writer of a guide-book in 1795 states that it was then well known that for some years the numbers had been so great that persons had occasionally been obliged to procure lodgings in the neighbouring villages.' 'The balls at Buxton were held in the grand room of the great hotel—dress balls on Wednesday nights, undress balls on Mondays and Fridays, these being varied by performances of "a good company of comedians" every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.' Those who failed to meet with accommodation in the inns of Buxton repaired

[1] *Diary of Madame d'Arblay*, iv. 212.

to the warm springs at Matlock, a place which is described by Mrs. Riland in May 1766 as being 'one of the pleasantest places she ever saw.'[1]

Speaking of his sojourn at Buxton, in his 'Memoirs,' James Lackington bears testimony to the very injudicious conduct on the part of some of the health-seekers who were there at the same time.

I remember (he says) six or seven gentlemen informing me they were violently afflicted with the gout and rheumatism, and had undertaken this journey in hopes of receiving benefit by the waters. These gentlemen often rode or walked about the cold dreary hills in very damp, wet mornings, and afterwards drank claret from three o'clock in the afternoon to five the next morning; but I did not continue here long enough to be a witness of the happy effects which must inevitably be produced by a persistence in such a judicious regimen.

Of the condition of Buxton in the latter part of the eighteenth century Dr. Thomas Somerville, minister of Jedburgh, has left a sketch in his memoirs of his own life and times. He says that he arrived at Buxton in the summer of 1793, where he 'had great pleasure in the society of Sir John and Lady Clerk.' 'At their lodgings,' he says, 'I met Miss Seward, a lady of literary celebrity, Mr. Seward, author of the Anecdotes &c., Sir Adam Ferguson, Sir Archibald Grant, and Baron Gordon.'[2] The same writer, however, furnishes an account of the condition of the common people and labourers in the vicinity of Buxton that is somewhat startling:—

Many of them lodge, or rather burrow, in caves dug out of the accumulated masses of lime and rubbish cast out from the mines and quarries abounding in that part of the country. After clearing a subterraneous apartment sufficient for the accommodation of their families, they open two crevices on the other side of the hillock, one for giving vent to the smoke and another for letting in the light. I found a husband, wife, and eight children huddled together in one of these deplorable habitations. Their allurement, as I understood, was the getting the possession of them without being subject to the burden of rent.

Dr. Somerville says that this wretched troglodyte population regarded the forfeiture of the privilege of inhabiting these caves

[1] See Bedford's *Three Hundred Years*, &c. pp. 85–6.
[2] *Memoirs*, p. 280.

as one of the worst calamities which could befall them, and that the Duke of Devonshire's steward had insisted upon their paying a small annual sum, as an acknowledgment of the right of the lord of the manor. A curious account of a funeral of one of these wretched creatures is preserved in his volume. The interment took place at Fairfield, where the parish church was situated, and

> After the ceremony of the burial service was performed with indecent hurry by an intoxicated curate in a dirty surplice, the family and near relations of the deceased, who stood around the coffin, fell down on their knees, and began to beat their breasts, sobbing and shrieking aloud. I was informed that this custom, which I had imagined to be peculiar to Ireland, was considered by all the families of lower rank as an indispensable mark of respect to the memory of departed friends.[1]

The sulphur wells and chalybeate waters of Harrogate in Yorkshire were enjoying much popularity among the nobility and gentry of the north of England after 1740. Smollett, who appears to have visited Harrogate, describes it in the pages of 'The Expedition of Humphry Clinker' as a wild common, bare and bleak, without tree or shrub, or the least sign of vegetation. The people of quality were lodged in a number of large inns, situated at some distance from each other, their respective companies forming distinct societies. They rose early, and repaired to the Wells, whence after drinking the waters, they returned home to breakfast. The time which intervened between this meal and dinner was spent in making excursions into different parts of the neighbourhood, or if the weather would not allow of this, in playing at cards and billiards. At the dinner table, each person took his or her seat, in the order in which they arrived at the place, and ascended gradually as others left it. Public balls were given at each inn in rotation, and strangers from other houses were admitted to them by ticket. Dr. Alexander Carlyle, an eminent Scotch divine, and his wife, sojourned in Harrogate during May 1763. They put up at the Dragon Inn. Writing in his journal he says:—

> Harrogate at this time was very pleasant, for there was a constant succession of good company, and the best entertainment of any watering-place in Britain. The house we were at was not only

[1] *Memoirs*, pp. 281, 282.

frequented by the Scotch at this time, but was the favourite house of the English nobility and gentry.

Breakfast, according to Dr. Carlyle, cost the gentlemen only twopence each for their muffins, as it was the fashion for the ladies to furnish tea and sugar. Dinners cost a shilling, suppers sixpence, chambers nothing at all, wine and other extras at the usual price; horses and servants might be procured at a reasonable rate. The company had two haunches of venison twice a week during the season, and the ladies gave afternoon tea and coffee in turns, which, coming but once in four or five weeks, amounted but to a trifle.

> The estates of the people at our table (writes Dr. Carlyle) did not amount to less than 50,000*l.* or 60,000*l.* per annum, among whom were several members of parliament; and they had not the precaution to order one newspaper among them all, though the time was critical.[1]

In conclusion, he says that in 1763 everything was cheap and good at Harrogate except wine, 'which, unless it was their claret, which was everywhere good and reasonable, was very bad indeed.'[2]

At 'Harrigate,' that testy Welsh squire, Matthew Bramble, observed that the visitors were crowded together in paltry inns, where the few tolerable rooms were monopolised by the friends and favourites of the house, and all the rest of the lodgers were obliged to put up with dirty holes, where there was neither space, air, nor convenience. With regard to the water itself, he observed that 'some people said it smelt of rotten eggs, and others compared it to the scouring of a foul gun.' There was one custom prevalent at Harrogate which L. Melford regarded, and not without reason, as a solecism in politeness. It was that of compelling the ladies to treat the gentlemen with tea in turns, an imposition from which not even girls of sixteen were exempted.

The beauty of the surrounding scenery combined with the tried healing virtues of the waters of its medicinal spring rendered Scarborough attractive to ailing, infirm, gay, opulent citizens of York and the flourishing centres of manufacture

[1] *Autobiog. of Dr. Carlyle*, p. 434. [2] *Ibid.* p. 442.

in the East Riding during the summer months. The spa and shopping filled up the earlier part of the morning, public teas the afternoons ; the playhouse, or a ball at Newstead's or Dormer's assembly rooms, which were governed by sets of rules and masters of ceremonies, the evening. A famous governor of this spa, according to the 'Scarborough Miscellany' for 1734, was Dicky Dickinson. It was customary for each visitor to pay a subscription of seven shillings and sixpence for the use of the spa, half a crown to the servers, and five shillings to the corporation towards the expenses of the spa house. Scarborough was then very little better than a decayed seaport town. There was no bridge from one cliff to the other in existence, and the north and south cliffs were entirely destitute of houses. Smollett causes J. Melford, in the 'Expedition of Humphry Clinker,' to say of Scarborough that at the time of their visit, there were two public rooms for the use of the company, and that the 'diversions' there were pretty much on the same footing as at Bath. Bathing machines were then quite a novelty, it is clear, judging from the elaborate description of them furnished by Julia Melford to her friend. Sheridan's amusing comedy, 'A Trip to Scarborough,' first performed in 1777, presents several aspects of life and manners in the place in the first part of the reign of the third George. Among those who journeyed to Scarborough in the month of August 1733 was Lord Chesterfield, who, in an epistle to Mrs. Howard as to the state of the town as it then was, says:

The ladies here are innumerable, and I really believe they all come for their healths, for they look very ill. The men of pleasure are Lord Carmichael, Colonel Ligonier, and the celebrated Tom Paget, who attend upon the Duke of Argyll all day and dance with the pretty ladies at night. Here are besides hundreds of Yorkshire beaux, who play the inferior parts, and, as it were, only tumble, while those three dance upon the high ropes of gallantry. The grave people are mostly Malignants, or in ministerial language, notorious Jacobites, such as Lord Stair, Marchmont, Anglesea, and myself, not to mention many of the House of Commons of equal disaffection. Moreover, Pulteney and Lord Carteret are expected here soon, so that if the ministry do not make a plot of this meeting it is plain they do not want one for this year. The people of this town are at present in great consternation upon a report they have heard from London, which, if true, they think will ruin them.

They are informed that, considering the vast consumption of these waters there is a design laid of excising them next session.

To understand fully the significance of the last five lines, it must be remembered that they were penned during the ferment occasioned by the excise scheme of Sir Robert Walpole.

In the second half of the eighteenth century the spas and waters began perceptibly to lose their attractions for seekers after health. That fickle goddess Fashion was now turning her face in the direction of the sea. As one of the satirical writers of the time observed :—

> Then all with ails in heart or lungs,
> In liver or in spine,
> Rush'd coastward to be cur'd like tongues,
> By dipping into brine.

About 1750 a certain Dr. Richard Russell had settled at Brighthelmstone (a name afterwards abbreviated by custom to Brighton), an insignificant village on the Sussex coast, and had informed the fashionable world, in a 'Dissertation' published in 1752, that a never-failing panacea for the cure of its maladies, real or imaginary, would be found in the waters of the ocean. Fashion needed not twice telling : she flew to the seaside like an arrow shot by an archer strong, and in consequence, everybody who was somebody followed in her wake. The poet Cowper, lamenting the all-prevailing mania in his poem of 'Retirement,' published in the closing decades of the century, observes :

> Your prudent grandmammas, ye modern belles,
> Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge Wells,
> When health required it, would consent to roam,
> Else more attached to pleasures found at home.
> But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
> Ingenious to diversify dull life,
> In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
> Fly to the coast for nightly, daily joys,
> And all impatient of dry land agree,
> With one consent to rush into the sea.

By this seaward movement the town of Brighton was one of the first to profit. That resort, which in this latter quarter

[1] *Countess of Suffolk's Corr.* ii. 60, 61.

of the nineteenth century has become a mirror of the life of the capital, was, down to the middle of the eighteenth century, nothing more than what Defoe called it on the occasion of his visit, 'a poor town,' shaped like an irregular quadrangle, containing a population numbering between two and three thousand, of whom the greater part were fishermen. Twice or three times a week, one solitary carrier's waggon wended its weary way along the miry roads which lay between it and the metropolis. There was a post-office, but few there were who wrote letters and fewer still who received any. There was also a market-place, with the blue vault of heaven as its roof; there were also alehouses for the use of the fishermen, farmers, and smugglers, which latter class not infrequently comprised the other two. From this obscurity it was timely rescued by the success which attended the publication of Dr. Russell's dissertation on the advantages of drinking sea-water and bathing in it. By 1761 Brighthelmstone had become 'a resort for the drinking of salt water and for bathing,' and for the next ten years there was a slow but steady influx of visitors. The accommodation for visitors was still of a very primitive kind; the best lodgings in the place in 1763 were, on the authority of Gilly Williams, the friend of George Augustus Selwyn, 'most execrable and scarcely habitable.' But, notwithstanding, the invalids and fancied invalids came, at first in pairs, then in dozens, and lastly in scores. 'I was some weeks this autumn at Brighthelmstone,' wrote the Sage of Fleet Street to his worshipper on November 16, 1776. 'The place was very dull and I was not well.' And why? Mrs. Piozzi tells us that the reason was 'because it was a country so truly desolate that if one had a mind to hang one's self for desperation at being obliged to live there, it would be difficult to find a tree on which to fasten the rope.' But Brighthelmstone was not altogether dull. The visitors occasionally devoted their evenings to the worship of the muse Terpsichore in the large room of the Ship Inn, and probably they did not find the time hang so very heavily on their hands as might be supposed. Matters mended very much when the maladies under which Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, brother of the reigning monarch, laboured,

led him and his duchess to settle for the salubrity of the air at Grove House, situated on a cliff to the east of what was known as Steyne ditch. There, in the summer of 1782, he was visited by that scapegrace nephew of his, George, Prince of Wales, who was so pleased with the locality that it was with difficulty he could tear himself away, and when he did so, the scheme of erecting a marine pavilion in the vicinity had taken firm possession of his mind. Within twelve years of the first visit of the heir-apparent, Holland had begun the building of the Pavilion, regardless of expense, for his more suitable and convenient accommodation, and from that period the ascendency of the place over every other marine resort in the kingdom may be regarded as having been established. And the grand fêtes, galas, and commemorations which Brighthelmstone, the quondam 'poor fishing town' of Defoe, witnessed during the last fifteen years of the eighteenth century, are they not written in the pages of the contemporary magazines and newspapers? Is it not in them that he who runs may read most elaborate accounts of the balls at which the Prince of Wales appeared in 'a most beautiful cut velvet gala suit of a dark colour, with green stripes, superbly embroidered down the front and seams with a broad embroidery of silver flowers intermixed with foil stones; of the waistcoat, white and silver tissue, embroidered like the coat; the garter fastened with a shoulder-knot of brilliants, star, George, &c.;[1] of the 'striped and spotted velvet; the embroidery of gold and silver, silk and stones, over point lace,' which Lord Paget sported; of the 'Spanish dresses of white crape spangled with gold and ornamented with precious stones,' in which Lady Beauchamp, the Misses Ingram, and the Misses Talbot appeared on the scene; of the 'crape petticoat adorned with stripes of shells and broad gold fringe;' all of which have long been forgotten, along with the dinners which elicited encomiums from Lauzun and Egalité, with the suppers which were served by Louis Weltje, and eaten by Edmund Burke, Charles James Fox, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan? Under the Prince of Wales's 'fostering smiles,' Brighthelmstone rose to the rank of the first watering-place in

[1] *European Mag.* 1790.

the kingdom. There was now an hotel which was intended to serve as a country Hummums or grand dormitory; there was at the lower end of North Street a feeble imitation of Vauxhall, called the Promenade Grove, a small enclosure or paddock fringed with a few gawky poplars, and decorated with flowers, bowers, benches, zigzag alleys, a ditch, and a wooden box for the minstrels; and there was a subscription house, or temple of fortune, on the Steyne, where the nobility were accustomed to reduce their characters and their estates at one and the same time.[1] At the Castle Tavern, owned by a man named Tilt, 'a beautiful suite of assembly rooms' was opened, and there a ball was held every Monday during the season, and card assemblies on Wednesdays and Fridays. By-and-by, Mr. Hicks, the proprietor of the Old Ship Tavern, adapted his capacious dining-room, the 'wainscot of which exhibited part of the story of Telemachus, painted on bronze on a blue ground,' for a similar purpose. By 1796 a commodious theatre had been erected, performances taking place within its walls on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. It is satisfactory to read, on the authority of the local historian, that, while nothing that was essential to the success of the public amusements was forgotten, 'literature' was not neglected in the Brighton of the eighteenth century, and to be referred in proof of this assertion to the three circulating libraries on the Steyne, replete with every species of that rabble rout of abominations, the novels of the Minerva Press, and to the two 'academies' which then flourished in the town, both of which were 'conducted with the greatest propriety.' The 'fashionable villages' of Hove, Worthing, and Eastbourne, were all places of summer resort of 'families of the first consequence and distinction,' after Brighton became known; a stage-coach running between the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, three times a week, waggons twice a week, and a post every day.

When the attractions of Brighthelmstone and its immediate neighbourhood had lost some of the gloss of novelty for health-seekers, they turned their attention in other directions. Margate

[1] *The New Brighton Guide*, 1796; Sicklemore's *History of Brighton*; Phillips's *Diary*.

was one of these directions. This obscure fishing village, for it was then no more than such, first began to receive visitors for the benefit of the sea water during the summer months about 1760. The practical application of steam to navigation, up and down the Thames, and railroad communication, were among the number of achievements yet unforeseen. Their proud triumphal marches nobody conceived. That which in the elegant language of the contemporary guide books is described as 'the most commodious and genteel' way of proceeding to these sea-coast villages, was by booking a passage on board one of the yachts, pacquets, or hoys which plied at very irregular intervals between them and Billingsgate, and on which the fares ranged from five shillings to four guineas each way. A voyage to Margate in a hoy was one which demanded no small amount of courage on the part of those who contemplated it, and the preparation of a month before the voyage was actually undertaken. To rise at six o'clock in the morning, and hastily to breakfast so as to depart in the hoy below London Bridge an hour later; to brave the pitilessness of the warring elements, if the day happened to be a rough one, on deck (as a hoy possessed no cabin to which to retreat); to dine off stony cheese, mouldy bread, and hard-boiled beef, and to swallow rum diluted with stale water; to lie for the space of several hours becalmed in Herne Bay, and on arriving at Margate (as there was no pier at which to land), to be hoisted on the shoulders of a fisherman and carried through the surf more dead than alive—these were the chief of the terrors and miseries which those who travelled by water to the Isle of Thanet in that age were called upon to face. Could some of our eighteenth-century forefathers rise from their graves and behold a steamer flying over the waves against wind and tide, without oar or sail, they would be not a little astonished, and curious enough to know the name of the planet to which they had been wafted after leaving their native earth.

Ramsgate is described by a visitor in 1787 as an 'unhandsome imitation of Wapping,' and the people as 'at least half a century behind their neighbours of Margate—being fat, foul, and fusty.' Its pier, which had been thirty-six years in build-

ing, was even then unfinished, and the tide withal threw up 'so much filth as to render the harbour a gully-hole.' The genius of the shore the writer declared to be extortion, the government of the place loose, and justice, lame as well as blind, stood 'in desperate want of Bow Street crutches.' During the season, Ramsgate was by no means full, but what company there was, was highly respectable.[1]

To those who in this age are accustomed annually to spend a few weeks at one or other of the numerous watering places of England, it is amusing to peruse the records of the earlier visitors which they received. Seaside towns, the names of which are now familiar to almost everyone, are by strangers described in that age in language which would now be deemed allowable only in those who visit Timbuctoo, or who lay bare the hidden secrets of the heart of Africa. With what solemnity does Henry Blaine, Minister of the Gospel at Tring in Herts, inform his readers that 'in hopes of recovering that invaluable blessing health,' he embarked on Friday, August 10, 1787, on board the ship 'Friends,' for Ramsgate in Kent. 'I had heard that there was such a place,' he writes, 'and many had raised my expectations by their reports of the efficacy of sea-bathing, and others encouraged my hopes by repeating their own experience of benefit received. By these means I was induced to determine on this little voyage.' And so he proceeds, adding wofully little to the reader's stock of information respecting Ramsgate, though favouring him with any number of reflections natural, moral, and divine.[2]

Dover, Deal, Sandwich, and other isolated places on the coast of Kent, which previously had scarcely ever been visited but by the winds and waves, became popular as health resorts after the outbreak of the American War, as is evident from the correspondence of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, who was long a resident at the second mentioned place.

Southampton, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, was a favourite resort of the gentry of the south-western

[1] Hardwicke Lewis, *Excursion to Ramsgate*, 1787; see also a curious description of Margate in the second half of the century in Keate's *Sketches from Nature*, 1775.

[2] *Voyage to Ramsgate*, 1788.

counties.[1] It possessed a mineral spring of the same quality as the Tunbridge waters, and this probably contributed to its success among those afflicted with 'tedious agues,' 'black and yellow jaundice,' 'green sickness,' &c. &c., whom the local historians and versifiers specially mention as seeking relief at it. The numerous fishing villages situated along the Devonshire coast were now beginning to attract visitors. Exmouth was rapidly rising into importance as a resort for valetudinarians, chiefly among Exeter people, from Saturday afternoon to Sunday night. The houses were in general low, with mud walls and thatched roofs, though there were a considerable number of brick, covered with slate, reputable and handsome, owned for the most part by the citizens of Exeter. The town possessed its whist club, its card parties and dances, more than 400 strangers occasionally sojourning there at one time.[2] So was Sidmouth, in the neighbourhood of Exeter, which is described by an American refugee who visited it in August 1776, as consisting of 'about a hundred houses, built with mud walls and thatched roofs, except a very few with Cornish tile and with shingles, situated very low in a bottom or vale, the inhabitants chiefly hired out to the Newfoundland traders and for the most part in low circumstances.'[3] Teignmouth, which was in 1778 resorted to 'by more and company of higher rank than Sidmouth could boast,'[4] was 'irregularly built, but the houses were more in number and of incomparably better appearance.' Axminster, wonderful to relate, not only possessed seven bathing machines, which were drawn into the water by a horse each, but boasted an alcove and ballroom, larger and more respectable than that at Sidmouth. Weymouth, so late as 1776, was 'a range of brick buildings, twelve in number, tasty and commodious,' facing the beach. Not very far above it at the end was an assembly room, and at a short distance were shops (for the sale of all kinds of articles, such as millinery and toys), coffee-houses, and circulating libraries. The beach was then furnished with twenty-two machines for bathing.

[1] *Malmesbury Correspondence*, i. 237.
[2] *Journal and Letters of Samuel Curwen*, p. 193.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 71. [4] *Ibid.* p. 198.

Shortly before 1785 the little town of Cromer, in the north of the county of Norfolk, first began to be frequented as a watering place by several families who were retired in their habits. The very favourable accounts which these gave of the beautiful scenery and the pleasant walks in the vicinity, the excellence of the beach at low water, and the simple manners of the inhabitants, soon became the means of attracting other visitors to participate in its enjoyments during the summer months.[1] The Right Honourable William Windham, M.P. for Norwich, who resided at Felbrigg Hall in the vicinity, frequently visited Cromer, and this doubtless had something to do with its rise as a watering place. It was in August 1795 that, accompanied by Mrs. Unwin, the unhappy poet Cowper revisited Mundesley, a village adjoining Cromer. Cowper had always been impressed by what Victor Hugo has somewhere called the ominous sobbing of the ocean, and his friend Johnson soon perceived that the sound of the breakers of the German Ocean produced a soothing effect upon him. It was from Mundesley that Cowper wrote his last letters to Lady Hesketh.

In July 1789 King George III. and his queen entered Weymouth, thereby showing such folk as had not yet been convinced that life by the sad sea waves was at least tolerable, and indirectly fostering that affectionate regard for the waters of the ocean which has been so marked a characteristic of English men and women of the present century.

From about the date that the American War drew to a termination, visitors began to frequent the Lake district, especially Bowness and Ambleside, in numbers which increased annually. Among the first whom their beauties attracted was the poet Gray, who crossing into Westmoreland from Yorkshire towards the latter end of the month of September 1769, was very greatly impressed by what he saw of them. Gray may almost be considered as the pioneer of Lake tourists. The next visitor of importance was William Wilberforce, who, frequently during the parliamentary recess, tenanted a house at Rayrigg, on the banks of Windermere in Westmoreland, from 1781 until 1788, when he gave it up for the reason that 'the banks of the

[1] Bayne's *History of Eastern England*, ii. 317.

Thames were scarcely more public than those of Windermere.'[1] That faithless spiritual overseer, Dr. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, had also fixed his residence in the Lake district; and in a letter written to the poet Cowper, at the suggestion of his friend Hayley, in 1797, he takes occasion to say: 'The lakes are visited by all the world: if an excursion into these parts should ever be made by yourself, I beg you would try the hospitality of Calgarth.' It is remarkable that as yet tourists to the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland failed utterly to perceive that grandeur of the surrounding mountain scenery which the English of the present century have, mainly through the instrumentality of Mr. Ruskin, been brought to perceive. Defoe, very early in the reign of George I., had viewed Westmoreland only as 'the wildest, most barren, and frightful' of all the counties he had passed through in the course of his tour through England, and speaks of the 'terrible' aspect presented by its hills. When Dr. John Langhorne wished to convey an idea of the impression it produced upon him when he first beheld it, he could find no fitter terms than 'delightful horrors.' So likewise one of the authorities cited by the Rev. William Gilpin, in his well-known work entitled 'Observations on the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland,' published in 1772, defined the 'three circumstances' which in his opinion when combined together made up the characteristics of one of the lakes to be these —'immensity, beauty, and horror.'[2] The first compiler of a guide book to the Lakes was Thomas West, author of 'The Antiquities of Furness,' and a priest of the Church of Rome, who died at the ancient seat of the Stricklands of Sizergh in Westmoreland in July 1779, when his little work had passed through a fifth edition.[3] During the latter part of his life, West, whose pastoral duties left him much leisure, had frequently accompanied parties of strangers on a tour of the lakes, and when no longer able to do this, he turned his knowledge of them to practical account by the compilation of a guide book.

[1] *Life of Wilberforce*, by his sons, i. 183.
[2] *Observations &c.*, ed. 1808, ii. 227.
[3] Atkinson's *Worthies of Westmoreland.*

## CHAPTER XIII.

### EDUCATION.

Retrograde condition of education in the last century—'The Grand Tour'—Yorkshire schools—Course of female instruction—Mrs. Trimmer's schools—State of the English universities—Remissness of discipline—Facility of graduation—Social life at Oxford and Cambridge.

THERE can be little doubt that the inveteracy and extent of the frivolity, depravity, ignorance, and low state of mental culture with which all classes of English society were imbued in the last century, may be attributed in great measure to the very insufficient character of the instruction which it was then considered necessary to impart during the seasons of childhood and early youth. When about eight or ten summers had passed over the head of a stripling, the question which most agitated the parental mind was whether he should, in accordance with the wholesome precept of the Olney moralist, eschew

> Schools that have outlived all just esteem
> Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme;

or whether he should straightway proceed 'to the academy of Mr. Quæ Genus at Edgware, to make acquaintance with my young Lord Knap, son of the Earl of Frize, or to Dr. Ticklepatcher's at Barnet, to form a friendship with young Stocks, the rich broker's only child.'[1] The parents still venerated the schoolmaster's rod, and regarded it 'as the only instrument of education, as a language or two to be its whole business.' When the preparatory schoolmaster had taught his pupil all he knew (which was at the best very little), or when he had

[1] Foote, *The Author.*

exhausted his patience with his dulness and stupidity, he was usually despatched to one of the great public schools, generally Eton, Harrow, Winchester, or Westminster, and under a rigorous course of the same discipline which we read that Pedagogue Thwackum applied to Master Tom Jones, attained, or did not attain, a trifling quantity of classic lore, at a most formidable expense to his parents or guardians. It was rare that schoolmasters took pains to stimulate the spirit of emulation among their scholars, or to foster any desire for the acquisition of knowledge. That they were sound in the faith according to Busby may be taken for granted, but beyond the mechanical performance of their dull task they did nothing. The claims of the physical and mathematical sciences were dismissed as altogether unworthy of notice, and modern languages were entirely neglected. Meanwhile, perhaps, the dancing and fencing masters had taken him in hand, and the music teacher had tried his utmost to attune his soul unto harmony.

By the time a youth arrived at the age of eighteen or nineteen, sometimes long before, with his head crammed full of the contents of Dalzell's 'Analecta Majora' and the 'Gradus ad Parnassum,' he was considered fully equipped, so far as mental acquirements were concerned, to proceed to one of the two universities, or, which was more often the case, to set out on 'the grand tour' of Europe under the conduct of a tutor who was as often as not a needy cleric.

> Nothing (wrote Addison in the early part of the century) is more frequent than to take a lad from grammar and taw, and under the tuition of some poor scholar, who is willing to be banished for thirty pounds a year and a little victuals, send him crying and snivelling into foreign countries. Thus he spends his time as children do at puppet shows, and with much the same advantage, in staring and gaping at an amazing variety of strange things; strange indeed, to one who is not prepared to comprehend the reasons and meanings of them, whilst he should be laying the solid foundation of knowledge in his mind, and furnishing it with just rules to direct his future progress in life, under some skilful master in the art of instruction.[1]

What the result of the grand tour usually was, it is hardly necessary to add. The pupil, ostensibly superintended by his

[1] *Spectator*, No. 364.

tutor, wandered for three or four years from place to place, knight-errant fashion, acquiring, instead of those accomplishments which improve and adorn a man of sense, the frivolous manners and the polite oaths of every nation and country that he visited, like

> Don Lumber, who had tour'd all Europe about,
> Contracted the vices—the virtues left out,
> Could bluster like thunder—a tempest each word,
> Would curse in ten languages, a Thraso at sword,

and 'commonly returned home more conceited, more unprincipled, more dissipated, and more incapable of any serious application either to study or to business than he could well have become in so short a time had he lived at home.'[1] Bearing this in mind, the illiterate character of the language which proceeds out of the mouths of some of the ministers of religion, lawyers, and physicians who figure in the pages of the novelists, becomes explicable. That the evils infected every one who undertook this tour is not to be supposed; many honourable exceptions to the rule there were, but there is no gainsaying that for every scholar that such a system turned out, or for every man of parts it gave to the professions, there were at least three who assumed the rôle and swelled the ranks of gamesters, swindlers, Darby Captains, Cock and Bottle Captains, Mohocks, and other contemptible creatures who disgraced and outraged all decent society by their vagaries.

Not until the present century had considerably advanced did the late Charles Dickens reveal to the public gaze, in the pages of his novel of 'Nicholas Nickleby,' the scandalous condition of secondary education, by his satirical delineation of the imposture, crass ignorance, and brutality, latent in the numerous private schools in Yorkshire, corresponding with the description of the pedagogue Squeers at his seminary of Dotheboys Hall, where youths were boarded, clothed, educated, and lodged, for the sum of twenty guineas per annum. But only imagine the miseries, privations, and sufferings which those whose misfortune it was to be consigned to them, must have endured in the 'academies,' the 'halls,' or the 'seminaries'

[1] Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book v. c. i.

of the same county, in the century preceding that in which Dickens's fiction appeared! It is possible to discover in the files of old newspapers, advertisements setting forth all the advantages which Mr. Wackford Squeers advertised as enjoyed at his establishment for twenty guineas per annum, at one half that fee.

Some samples of these advertisements are appended :—

At Knaton, near Thirsk in Yorkshire, by the Rev. Mr. Addison and proper assistants, young gentlemen are conveniently boarded, decently clothed, and regularly instructed in the English, Latin, and Greek languages; writing in all hands; arithmetic and geometry, with their uses in all kinds of measuring, trigonometry plane and spherical, applied to navigation, astronomy, &c. Algebra and book-keeping after the Italian method. They are furnished with books, paper, and other necessaries, at 10*l.* per annum. For further satisfaction apply to Joseph Garth, Esquire, New North Street, Red Lion Square; Mr. Stapleton, watchmaker, near Carnaby Market. Mr. Addison intends to be in town the 14th inst. and may be treated with as usual at the Sussex Coffee House in Fleet Street every day from ten to twelve, and at Benn's Coffee House, New Bond Street, from two to four, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.[1]

The Rev. Peter Rumney, Master of the Free Grammar School at Kirby Hall, near Richmond, Yorkshire, proposes to board and clothe twenty boys, and no more; and, by himself and proper assistants, to educate them for twelve pounds per annum, according to the following conditions. They shall constantly dine with the master; they shall be neatly clothed, and great care shall be taken to keep them clean; their bedchambers, beds, and bedding, shall be as good as any gentleman can desire for his son. As to their education, they shall be taught to read English; they shall be fitted for the University or compting house, and taught writing and arithmetic, as their parents shall direct. Such boys as are intended for trades and not to learn Latin, shall read the best authors in our own language; and be taught to speak and write English grammatically, and to spell it truly.[2]

At Bowes ancient Grammar School, in Yorkshire, by Mr. Lamb, licensed master, and proper assistants, young gentlemen are taught the languages, readily and completely qualified for the sea, and any trade or business; neatly boarded, decently clothed, supplied with books and all necessaries, at ten pounds a year each. Mr. Lamb is now in town, and to be spoke with morning and evening at Mr. Lamb's, carpenter, in Noble Street, near Foster Lane, Cheapside; and from ten to twelve every day at Abington's Coffee House,

[1] *Public Advertiser*, Friday, April 4, 1755.
[2] *Ibid.* Tuesday, April 22, 1755.

near Gray's Inn, Holborn, till the 26th instant, when he will (either by land or sea) accompany several young gentlemen to his school at Bowes.[1]

At Wanlass Hall, near Richmond, Yorkshire, youths are completely, readily, and according to the most improved methods, taught the English, Latin, and Greek languages; to write the mercantile and law hands; arithmetic, vulgar and decimal, with their application; book-keeping as it is now practised in its greatest perfection in the merchants' compting houses; mensuration, gauging, surveying of lands, trigonometry plane and spherical, geometry, dialling, geography exemplified in the use of the globes, and navigation in all its parts, by Mr. Head, and three assistants of experience and humanity, who are particularly qualified in the branches they are respectively charged with; the French language is taught and spoke in great purity at this school. They are boarded and clothed in a neat and decent manner, educated as above, supplied with books, paper, and all necessaries, at 10*l.* a year.[2]

The 'Public Advertiser' of Thursday, April 28, 1774, contains this advertisement :—

At Thirsk in Yorkshire, in a large commodious house, and healthful situation, the Rev. Daniel Addison, with proper assistants, undertakes for fourteen guineas a year to board, clothe, and teach young gentlemen the classics, and English grammatically, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping by double entry, called merchants' accounts, geometry, mensuration, navigation, algebra, &c. For other particulars please to inquire of Mr. Liefe, woollendraper, in New Bond Street, and of Mr. Lee, hatter and hosier, opposite the Mews Gate, Clerkenwell.

The subjoined advertisement is extracted from the 'Times' for January 8, 1798 :—

At Mr. Galland's Academy, Startforth, near Barnard Castle, Yorkshire, youth are taught the English, Latin, Greek, &c. languages; writing in all the various hands, arithmetic, useful branches of the mathematics, the Italian method of book-keeping, geography, use of the globes, &c., are boarded, clothed, and supplied with all necessaries, at 14 guineas per annum, if under nine years of age; if above, 15 guineas per annum. For further particulars apply to Mr. Galland, at the Burton Coffee House, Cheapside, where he attends every day from 11 till 2 o'clock, and will refer applicants to people of respectability who have been under his tuition.

Under the significant heading of the 'Golden Age,' there is printed in a volume, embodying the chief contents of the pocket-

[1] *Public Advertiser*, Thursday, May 8, 1755.
[2] *Ibid.* Friday, May 9, 1755.

book of Thomas Wale of Shelford, in Cambridgeshire, a short account of the fees and requirements of sundry Latin schools between the years 1771 and 1775. From this synopsis it appears that each scholar who was then admitted to St. Paul's School, in addition to paying one guinea as entrance fee, was required to bring with him a spoon, a bureau desk, and six table napkins. The annual charge for board and lodging was £31 10*s.*, and this in addition to the tuition fee, one guinea per quarter, brought up a total of £35 14*s.* From the same interesting record it appears that charges at Mr. Fountain's establishment in Marylebone amounted to £30 annually, Mr. Heath at Harrow charged for board sixteen guineas, Mr. Oswin of Wisbech, three guineas for entrance and twenty-one guineas for board, school, washing, &c., Mr. Wheeldon of St. Ives charged one guinea for entrance and twenty for board, while Mr. Vever and assistants at Reigate, Surrey, guaranteed the 'short and compendious finishing of youth' for sixteen guineas. 'N.B.,' wrote Thomas Wale, in his pocket-book,' they tell me there are masters (somewhere near Borrowbridge or Penrith) who will board, schooll, and clothe boys for 10*l.* p. a.' The result was that Master Charles Wale was sent on July 16, 1773, to the academy of Mr. Oswin of Wisbech, taking with him on that memorable occasion the following stock of learning: 'A French Grammar. A Latin Do. A Spelling Book. An Æsop's Fables. A small Common Prayer Book. A Summing or Erithmatick Book. And a Slate.'[1]

Gilbert Wakefield, writing of a school kept at Wilford, near Nottingham, which he attended in 1763, says that the principal, the Rev. Isaac Pickthall, was accustomed, from a pure excess of conscientiousness and a religious anxiety of doing justice to his pupils, to make them take their places in the schoolroom at five o'clock in the morning in summer, and to continue there, with the intermission of less than two hours for breakfast and dinner, till six at night.[2]

[1] H. J. Wale, *My Grandfather's Pocket-Book*, pp. 158-67.

[2] *Memoirs*, i. 31. For additional proofs of the miseries of school life, and the brutality by which the discipline was characterised, see Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*, i. 39; Reynolds's *Life and Times*, i. 14; and the *Literary Recollections* of the Rev. Richard Warner, i.

Robert Southey has left on record some pleasing reminiscences of a school kept in Bristol by a Welshman named William Williams, at which he attended from 1782 till about 1787 :—

I had a Latin lesson every day. But my lessons were solitary ones, so few boys were there in my station, and indeed in the station of life next above mine, who received a classical education in those days, compared with what is the case now (1823). Writing and arithmetic, with at most a little French, were thought sufficient at that time for the sons of opulent Bristol merchants. I was in Phædrus when I went there, and proceeded through Cornelius Nepos, Justin, and the Metamorphoses. One lesson in the morning was all. The rest of the time was given to what was deemed there of more importance—writing. We did copies of capital letters there, and were encouraged to aspire at the ornamental parts of penmanship. . . . When I had gone through the Metamorphoses, Williams declared his intention of taking me from the usher, and instructing me in Virgil himself, no other of his pupils having proceeded so far. But the old man I suppose discovered that the little classical knowledge which he ever possessed had passed away as irrevocably as his youth, and I continued under the usher's care, who kept me in the Eclogues so long that I was heartily sick of them, and I believe have never looked in them from that time. Over and over again did that fellow make me read them ; probably because he thought the book was to be gone through in order, and was afraid to expose himself in the Georgics.

Southey also gives an amusing account of the perplexity which he experienced on being told by his preceptor to write a letter home. The lad had never written a letter, except a very formal one at another school just before the commencement of the holidays, 'every word of which was of the master's dictation, and which used to begin "Honoured Parents."' Probably when the reader has perused the following paragraph he will incline to the belief that Dotheboys Hall, at 'the delightful village of Dotheboys, near Greta Bridge in Yorkshire,' was not quite such a caricature as is commonly supposed :—

Before I take leave of Williams, two or three memoranda must be scored off. There was a washing-tub in the playground, with a long towel on a reel beside it ; this tub was filled every morning for the boarders to perform their ablutions, all in the same water, and whoever wished to wash hands or face in the course of the day had no other. I was the only boy who had any repugnance to dip his hands in this pig-trough. There was a large cask near, which received the rain-water ; but there was no getting at the water, for the top was covered, and to have taken out the spiggot would have been a

punishable offence. I, however, made a little hollow under the spiggot to receive the drippings, just deep enough to wet the hands, and there I used to wash my hands with clean water when they required it. But I do not remember that anyone ever followed my example.[1]

What the curriculum of a respectable school was in the second half of the eighteenth century may be gleaned from a passage in one of the boyish letters of William Hazlitt the elder, addressed to John Hazlitt, his elder brother, from a private school conducted at Wem in the county of Shropshire in March 1788, at which time Hazlitt was in his tenth year. Having mentioned that he has been learning to draw, he proceeds to say :—

Next Monday I shall begin to read Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,' and 'Eutropius.' I shall like to know all the Latin and Greek I can. I want to learn how to measure the stars. . . . I began to cipher a fortnight after Christmas, and shall go into the rule of three next week. I can teach a boy of sixteen already who was ciphering eight months before me ; is he not a great dunce ? I shall go through the whole ciphering book this summer, and then I am to learn Euclid. We go to school at nine every morning. Three boys begin with reading the Bible. Then I and two others show our exercises. We then read the 'Speaker' (i.e. Dr. Enfield's). Then we all set about our lessons, and those who are first ready, say first. At eleven we write and cipher. In the afternoon we stand for places at spelling, and I am almost always first. We also read and do a great deal of business besides. . . . I shall go to dancing this month.[2]

The course of study which is indicated in this passage, coupled with the whole tone of the lad's letter, would bespeak a marked improvement in scholastic routine, if there were not strong reasons for believing that the school which young Hazlitt attended was quite an exception to the general rule.

Dames' schools were at this time very numerous in England. The poet Shenstone has limned a very favourable picture of one such school, and the dame who kept it, in his poem called 'The Schoolmistress.' The chief apparatus besides the rod in use in the dames' schools at this period was the horn book—in which the leaf was simply pasted at the back of a piece of horn.

[1] *Life and Corr. of Southey*, ed. by his son, i. 77–112.
[2] *Memoirs of W. Hazlitt*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, i. 9.

It will be remembered that Shenstone alludes to this in his poem of the 'Schoolmistress,' when he speaks of the children taking their places round an ancient dame :—

> Their books of stature small they take in hand,
> Which with pellucid horn secured are
> To save from fingers wet the letters fair.

And Cowper, in his 'Tirocinium' (1784), says that infant minds were fed upon fare

> Neatly secured from being soiled or torn
> Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,
> A book to please us at a tender age,
> 'Tis called a book, though but a single page.

The dimensions of the horn book—a tool of education that is now quite a rarity—were about nine by five inches. The alphabet in large and small letters, syllabarum, the nine figures in Roman and Arabic numerals, and the Lord's Prayer were printed on a sheet of white paper which was laid upon a thin piece of wood, covered with a sheet of horn, secured in its place by tacks driven through a border or mounting of brass, which was intended to keep the sheet of paper or 'book,' as it was denominated, unsoiled. The first line of the horn book was called the Christ-cross-row, according to Dr. Johnson, because 'a cross was placed at the beginning to show that the end of learning is piety.'

If the education of boys and young men was defective, the quality and extent of that which was usually imparted to girls were, if anything, worse. The course of feminine instruction began about the mature age of eight, and ended soon after fifteen, or at latest sixteen. For the most part it comprised the acquisition of divers branches of education which now form part of the ordinary curriculum, but which were then commonly comprised under the category of 'accomplishments'—some slight proficiency in 'the poetry of motion,' a little vocal and instrumental music, perhaps a smattering of a language other than her own, of which her ignorance was profound, and as much knowledge of 'accompts' as would by-and-by enable her to compute with accuracy the several amounts of her gains and losses at the hazard or faro tables. Any lady of *ton* in the

last century who could read tolerably well, and who could legibly write her own name, was set down by all whose opinion was worth having as a learned woman. If she was further equal to the feat of inditing an occasional vivacious epistle to her friends and acquaintances, without outrageously violating the ordinary rules of English syntax, the consensus of opinion proclaimed her nothing short of a brilliant wit.

A young lady's education was considered by her friends as complete when she had completed her sixteenth year. Soon afterwards she passed into London or provincial society, where her chief end and aim was to display what attractions she possessed to the best possible advantage, and to contract a marriage with some person of quality without delay. The reader may, perhaps, be able to gather some idea of the prescribed standard of a liberal education for the fair sex in the eighteenth century after a perusal of the subjoined advertisements :—

At the French Boarding School for Young Ladies in the Broadway, Westminster, French is taught in its purity of language ; English, writing, drawing, and accompts, in the utmost perfection ; needlework, dancing, and every other article to perfect and complete an early education. Moderate terms. The writing is performed by a young lady that writes all the variety of hands equal to copperplate ; who also teaches at leisure hours in a private character abroad.

At Buckingham, a pleasant and healthy situation, the Boarding School for Young Ladies by Mrs. Whitney and proper assistants (who take the greatest care of their morals), is continued on the following terms:—Entrance, 1*l.* 1*s.* ; board, washing, reading, plain and fine needlework, 12*l.* 12*s.* a year. Writing, 5*s.* a quarter. Dancing, 10*s.* 6*d.* a quarter ; entrance for ditto, 10*s.* 6*d.* Tea and sugar for the year if required 1*l.* 1*s.* There are two months' vacations in the year, at Christmas and Whitsuntide ; and if any of the young ladies spend them at school they are to allow a guinea for each vacation. A more particular account and character of this school may be had at Mr. Henshaw's, opposite Norfolk Street in the Strand. A person of undeniable character for an usher at a boarding-school, or for a complete clerk for an accompting house, may be heard of at the same place.[1]

Ladies' Boarding School, near Finsbury Square.—Mrs. Cross respectfully informs the gentry, merchants, and her friends in general that her school will recommence on Monday the 22nd inst., and that she has accommodation for five more young ladies

[1] *Public Advertiser*, April 29, 1774.

as boarders. She hopes that the flattering success she has met with for these fourteen years, in educating the daughters of some of the first families in the city (to whom references may be had), will be no small recommendation to those ladies and gentlemen who may honour her with their patronage. The house stands in a very airy and healthy situation, three doors from the Square, of which Mrs. Cross has a key, and in which the young ladies will walk as often as convenience and the weather permit.[1]

An observation of Dr. Johnson in regard to the state of popular enlightenment in Addison's day would not have been altogether inapplicable to it until far on in the reign of George III. 'That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk was rarely to be found. Men not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance; and in the female world any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured.' Even people of rank often displayed great laxity in their orthography. Pope's correspondence is not above reproach in this respect, nor is that of Lord Hervey, who, curiously enough, was critical of it in others. Letters always begin 'my Lord' or 'my Lady,' no matter whether correspondents were on the easiest and most affectionate terms or not. Education among the lower classes was in so deplorable a condition that members of families were absolutely unable to correspond with one another. Thousands even in London could not write their own names, and it was accounted nothing uncommon to see in those districts of the capital which lay near the river, such as Wapping and Shadwell, cards stuck in shop windows, or exposed on stalls, informing the passers-by that letters were written there to all parts of the world, or that an assortment of letters on all kinds of subjects might be inspected within.

As the eighteenth century draws towards its close, traces of individual effort in the matter of education become apparent. This change dates from about the time of the publication of Hannah More's writings; and the establishment of the Sunday and industrial schools by the celebrated Mrs. Trimmer may be regarded as the first fruits of this movement. Miss Burney, writing in 1791, pays the following tribute to these schools :—

[1] *Times*, Monday, January 8, 1798.

The name of Mrs. Trimmer led us to the Sunday schools and the schools of industry. They are both in a very flourishing state at Bath, and Lady Spencer has taken one school under her own immediate patronage. On Sunday she sent me a message upstairs to say she would take me to the Sunday school if I felt well enough to desire it. It was a most interesting sight, such a number of poor innocent children all put in a way of right, most taken immediately from every way of wrong, lifting up their little hands to heaven, and joining in those prayers of mercy and grace which, even if they understood not, must at least impress them with a general idea of religion, a dread of evil and a love of good.

Directing our attention now to the national Universities, it must be confessed that they did not during this period encourage as they should have done the cultivation of polite learning. Academic institutions have a two-fold purpose to serve. In the first place, they should be the final and most influential seminaries for the instruction of youth; and in the second, they ought to be the centres of learning for all the land, the pioneers of knowledge and enlightenment. In the Universities, as in a focus, all the intellectual activity of a people should be concentrated, in order that it may be diffused thence over every branch of theoretical and practical life. Tried by such a standard as this, what is to be said of the two great seats of learning in the last age? Very little to their credit. Both, but more especially Oxford, seem to have given up altogether even the pretence of teaching. Dean Swift declared in his 'Essay on Modern Education' that he had heard

more than one or two persons of high rank declare they could learn nothing more at Oxford and Cambridge than to drink ale and smoke tobacco; wherein he firmly believed them, and could have added some hundred examples from his own observation in one of those Universities; but they all were of young heirs, sent thither only for form, either from schools where they were not suffered by their careful parents to stay above three months in the year, or from under the management of French family tutors, who yet often attended them to their college to prevent all possibility of their improvement.[1]

Equally applicable were these words to both Universities throughout the eighteenth century. Ample confirmation of

[1] *Works*, ed. Scott, 1824, ix. 68.

them is furnished, so far as Oxford is concerned, by Dr. Johnson, Gibbon, and others, who were their contemporaries.

Samuel Johnson entered Pembroke College, Oxford, as a commoner in October 1728, when he was nineteen years old, and had as his tutor a certain Mr. Jordan, of whom, according to Boswell, he spoke in the following terms :—

> He was a very worthy man, but a heavy man, and I did not much profit by his instructions. Indeed, I did not attend him much. The first day after I came to college, I waited upon him and then stayed away four. On the sixth Mr. Jordan asked me why I had not attended. I answered I had been sliding in Christ Church meadow. And this I said with as much *nonchalance* as I am now talking to you.[1]

This, translated into facts, means that the Oxford undergraduate of the days of George II. came or attended lectures as he liked, and that his gain was much about the same either way. It is amusing to find the Earl of Chesterfield, writing in the 'World' for May 3, 1753, in the character of a country gentleman, saying that 'when he took his son away from school he resolved to send him directly abroad, as he had been at Oxford himself.'

Writing to his friend Gray the poet, from Christchurch, under date November 14, 1735, West says :—

> Consider me very seriously here in a strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves doctors and masters of arts ; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown ; consider me, I say, in this melancholy light, and then think if something be not due to yours.

This amusing and pert allusion to his University is followed in another letter by a reference to 'half a dozen new little proctorlings.' So rebellious a description of his *alma mater* is more than matched by the sarcasm of Gray, who, in writing of Cambridge as it was in his day, says :—

> Surely it was of this place, now Cambridge, but formerly known by the name of Babylon, that the prophet spoke when he said 'the wild beasts of the desert shall dwell there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall build there, and satyrs shall dance there ; their forts and towers shall be a den for ever, a

[1] Boswell's *Johnson*, c. iii.

joy of wild asses,' &c., &c. You must know that I do not take degrees, and after this term shall have nothing more of college impertinences to undergo. I have endured lectures daily and hourly since I came last. Must I plunge into metaphysics? Alas! I cannot see in the dark; nature has not furnished me with the optics of a cat. Must I pore upon mathematics? Alas! I cannot be in too much light; I am no eagle. It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly.

The historian of the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' furnishes some interesting reminiscences of his residence at Oxford in the 'Memoirs' of his own life. He states that after a short stay at Westminster School he entered Magdalen College, then accounted one of the most wealthy foundations in the University, in April 1752, before he had completed the fifteenth year of his age, as a fellow commoner, and there spent a year and two months, 'the most idle and unprofitable,' as he says, of his whole life. 'To the University of Oxford I acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother.' It is true he excuses himself on the ground of tender years, defective preparation, and an untimely entrance, and that he quotes with approval Bishop Lowth's widely different account of his academical career; but, further on, he says that during his stay the presidency was vacated, and his successor was remarkable only for remembering

that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform.

Instead of guiding the studies and watching over the behaviour of his disciples, I was never summoned to attend even the ceremony of a lecture; and excepting one voluntary visit to his rooms, during the eight months of his titular office, the tutor and pupil lived in the same college as strangers to each other. The want of experience, of advice, of occupation, soon betrayed me into some improprieties of conduct; ill-chosen company, late hours, and inconsiderate expense. My growing debts might be secret, but my frequent absence was visible and scandalous, and a tour to Bath, a visit into Buckinghamshire, and four visits to London in the same winter, were costly and dangerous frolics. In all these excursions I eloped from Oxford, I returned to college, in a few days I eloped again, as if I had been an independent stranger in a hired lodging, without once hearing the voice of admonition, without once feeling the hand of control.

How far Gibbon was in these assertions confining himself to the truth, the present Warden of Merton College, Oxford, may be allowed to say :—

> We cannot but acknowledge that Gibbon's estimate of the University in the middle of the century is confirmed by an examination of University records. If we may judge by the statistics of matriculation, the nation at large had lost confidence in Oxford education. . . . It is equally certain that Oxford contributed far less than in former ages to politics or literature.[1]

Dr. Alexander Carlyle, a graduate of Edinburgh University, and a divine of the Presbyterian communion, on his return journey to Scotland in 1758, took in Oxford on his way ; and, while there, witnessed one of his friends, named John Douglas, 'in the act of one of his wall lectures' for the degree of doctor in divinity. 'We found Douglas sitting in a pulpit in one of their chapels, with not a soul to hear him but three old beggar women, who came to try if they might get some charity. On seeing us four enter the chapel, he talked to us and wished us away, otherwise he would be obliged to lecture.' As they persistently refused to depart without receiving a specimen of Oxonian scholarship, Douglas read a few verses from a portion of the Greek Testament and then proceeded to the exposition of it in the Latin tongue. The visitors gave him a five minutes' hearing and then departed. 'Douglas,' continues Carlyle, 'came to dinner ; and in the evening Messrs. Foster and Vivian, of Balliol College, came to us to ask us to a collation to be given by that society next day. They were well-informed and liberal-minded men, but from them and their conversation we learned that this was far from applying to the generality of the University.'[2]

What graduation was in the days of George III. may be gleaned from the following testimony of Lord Eldon, who, as John Scott, a member of University College, presented himself for examination in the month of February 1770 :

[1] *Hist. Univ. Oxford*, c. xv. 177. For additional proof of this see Bentham's *Memoirs*, in Bowring's edition of his works, x. 38-41 ; Thistlewayte's *Memoirs of Bishop Bathurst ;* Polwhele's *Traditions and Recollections ;* and the early correspondence of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe.

[2] *Autob. of Dr. Carlyle*, p. 363.

An examination for a degree at Oxford (wrote he) was in my time a farce. I was examined in Hebrew and in history. 'What is the Hebrew for the place of a skull?' I replied, 'Golgotha.' 'Who founded University College?' I stated; though, by the way, the point is sometimes doubted, that King Alfred founded it. 'Very well, sir,' said the examiner, 'you are competent for your degree.'[1]

Nearly eleven years after this little scene was enacted, the Rev. Dr. Vicesimus Knox, Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, and head-master of Tunbridge School from 1778 to 1812, published two volumes of excellent essays on a Liberal Education. In one of these volumes Knox expressed his conviction that at the time of writing he was perfectly convinced that there were then in both Universities 'men as good and as learned as others who were not in them, and who never were; but still he contended that the general tendency of those institutions, as they were then conducted, was rather favourable to the diffusion of ignorance, idleness, vice, and infidelity.'[2] The first volume of his 'Moral and Literary Essays,' published in 1778, contains a scathing exposure of the customary formalities and ceremonies through which undergraduates were required to pass before proceeding to 'the wished-for honour of a bachelor's degree.'

Every candidate is obliged to be examined in the whole circle of the sciences by three masters of arts of known choice. The examination is to be holden in one of the public schools, and to continue from nine o'clock till eleven. The masters take a most solemn oath that they will examine properly and impartially. Dreadful as all this appears, there is always found to be more of appearance in it than reality, for the greatest dunce usually gets his testimonium signed with as much ease and credit as the finest genius.

Then follows an account of which it is unnecessary to reproduce more than the chief heads. The statutes required that the examinee should translate familiar English phrases into corresponding Latin :—

Now is the time (wrote the doctor) when the masters show their wit and jocularity. Droll questions are put on any subject, and the puzzled candidate furnishes diversion by his awkward

[1] Twiss, *Life of Lord Eldon*, i. 57.

[2] *Essays*, ii. sect. 29.

embarrassment. I have known the questions on this occasion to consist of an inquiry into the pedigree of a racehorse. And it is a common question, after asking what is the *summum bonum* of various sects of philosophers, to ask what is the *summum bonum* or chief good among Oxonians. This familiarity only takes place when the examiners are pot companions of the candidate, which is, indeed, usually the case, for it is reckoned good management to get acquainted with two or three jolly young masters of arts, and supply them well with port previously to the examination.

Continuing, Knox says that both the examiners and the examinees often conversed either on the last drinking bout or on horses, or read the newspaper or a novel, or diverted themselves as well as they could in any manner till the clock struck eleven, when all parties descended, and the testimonium was signed by the examiners. A little while later, the day for the conferring of degrees arrived, when the candidates proceeded to the Convocation House, there to swear an abundance of oaths, to pay a sum of money in fees, and, after whispering lies, to rise up fully fledged bachelors of arts.[1] Before proceeding to the degree of master of arts at that time, candidates were perforce engaged in complying with trumpery formalities, after the due performance of which, they again took oaths wholesale, paid fees, and then stepped on to the threshold of life, provided with an 'undeniable passport to carry them through it with credit.'

These are no mere fancy sketches. Knox was an exemplary divine for his times, not a person to be in the least suspected of mendacity, and a residence of eight years in the University had furnished him with abundant facilities for observing the workings and the effect of the system of learning pursued there, its qualities, its extent, and its tendencies. Furthermore, it is worthy of note that it was in consequence of these animadversions and of the remarkable success of his treatise on a liberal education, that Oxonia was induced to set about reforming her ways.[2] Dr. Adam Smith, the author of the 'Wealth of Nations,' who was himself an alumnus of Balliol College, assigns one weighty reason, in the treatise by which he is best known, for the remissness evinced by the teaching body, namely, that it

[1] *Works*, ed. 1824, i. 379–80.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 383.

arose by reason of their deriving their principal means of subsistence 'from a fund, altogether independent of their success and reputation in their particular professions.'[1]

'Accidental visitors to Oxford,' wrote Knox, 'are naturally led to conclude that here, at length, wisdom, science, learning, and whatever else is praiseworthy, for ever flourish and abound.' It was, doubtless, some such thoughts as these that supported Carl Philip Moritz, a Lutheran minister of Berlin, as footsore and weary he walked into the City of Spires shortly before the hour of twelve on a certain Sunday night in the month of June 1782. On the road he had met a clergyman named Maule, who combined the duties of curate of Dorchester with those of classical lecturer at Corpus Christi, returning to his college, and with him he had conversed in the Latin tongue, and on the opinions to which Dr. Priestley had then been recently giving expression. On entering Oxford, Moritz found it was nearly twelve, and, supposing that all inns and taverns would be closed, parted with his companion and prepared to pass the night on a stone bench in the High Street. The curate, however, would not hear of such a thing, and proposed to take him to a neighbouring inn (the Mitre, as it subsequently turned out), to which they were readily admitted. 'But how great was my astonishment,' wrote Moritz, 'when on our being shown into a room on the left, I saw several [reverend] gentlemen in academic dress, sitting round a large table, each with his pot of beer before him. My travelling companion introduced me to them, as a German clergyman whom he could not sufficiently praise for my correct pronunciation of the Latin, my orthodoxy, and my good walking.' Pastor Moritz met with a cordial reception, and in the course of conversation favoured the company with as graphic an account as he was able of the state of the German Universities, laying particular stress upon the fact that among the students who attended them riots and disturbances were of very frequent occurrence. 'Oh, we are very unruly here too,' said one of the clerics, as he took a hearty draught out of his pot of beer, and

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, book v. c. i.

knocked on the table with his hand. On one or two occasions a gentleman named Clark attempted to be witty at the expense of the Scriptures. 'I had the good fortune,' says Moritz, 'to be able to convict him of his ignorance of its language and meaning.' The conversation after this turned on different subjects, the company consumed huge potations of strong ale, and at last, when dawn drew near, the traveller was somewhat taken aback at hearing the gentleman by whom he had been introduced exclaim (rather emphatically), 'I must read prayers this morning at All Souls.' Moritz stayed two days in Oxford, and had for his guide and mentor during that time the Rev. Mr. Maule, who informed him that he had been eighteen years resident in the university. Proceeding along High Street the Prussian saw the poet laureate of that day, Thomas Warton, Fellow of Trinity College. The dress of the students, he felt constrained to own, pleased him far beyond the boots, cockades, and other frippery of many in Germany. Nor was he less delighted with the better behaviour and conduct which, he thought, in general did so much credit to the Oxford undergraduates.[1]

There is in existence a clever little *jeu d'esprit*, entitled 'A Companion to the Guide and a Guide to the Companion,' generally attributed to the pen of Dr. Thomas Warton, who was Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1757 till 1790, in which some of the recreations in which Oxford undergraduates engaged in the Georgian era are very humorously described :—

The prevailing notion is erroneous with regard to the number of our libraries. Besides those of Radcliffe, Bodley, and private colleges, there have of late years been many libraries founded in our coffee-houses, for the benefit of such academics as have neglected or lost their Latin and Greek. In these useful repositories grown gentlemen are accommodated with the Cyclopædia. The magazines afford history, divinity, &c., the Reviews form the complete critic, without consulting the dry rules of Aristotle, Quintilian, and Bossu, and enable the student to pass his judgment on volumes which he never read. Novels supply the place of experience,

[1] Moritz's *Travels*, ed. Mavor, pp. 89–95. For further information concerning the social life of Oxford in the last century see a valuable collection of papers by an anonymous writer, entitled *Oxford during the Last Century*, published in the city in 1859.

occasional poems diffuse the itch of rhyming, and haply tempt a young fellow to turn smart, and commence author, either in the pastoral, lyric, or elegiac way. As there are here books suited to every taste, so are there liquors adapted to every species of reading. Amorous tales may be perused over arrack punch and jellies; insipid elegies over orgeat or capillaire; politics over coffee; divinity over port; and defence of bad generals and bad ministers over whipt syllabubs. In a word we may pronounce that learning is no longer a dry pursuit. The schools of this university are more numerous than is generally supposed, among which we must reckon three spacious and superb edifices, situated to the south of the High Street, one hundred feet long by thirty in breadth, vulgarly called tennis courts, where exercise is regularly performed both morning and afternoon. Add to these certain schools familiarly denominated billiard tables, where the laws of motion are exemplified, and which may be considered as a necessary supplement to our courses of experimental philosophy. Nor must we omit the many nine-pin and skittle-alleys, open and dry, for the instruction of scholars in geometrical knowledge, and particularly for improving the centripetal principle. Other schools and places of academical discipline, not generally known as such, may be mentioned. The Peripatetics execute the courses proper to their system upon the Parade; navigation is learnt on the Isis; gunnery on the adjacent hills; horsemanship on Port Meadow, Bullingdon Green, the Henley, Wycombe, Woodstock, Abingdon, and Banbury roads. The axis in peritrochio is admirably illustrated by a scheme in a phaeton. The doctrine of the screw is practically explained most evenings in the private rooms, together with the motion of fluids.

The course of study pursued during the eighteenth century in the sacred halls of learning on the banks of the river Cam was a decided improvement upon that pursued on the banks of the Isis. The general mediocrity and listlessness which hung like a cloud over the latter was absent from the former. Dr. Brodrick inclines to the belief that in intellectual attainments Oxford was outstripped by Cambridge,[1] and the evidence goes far to warrant such a conclusion. There is, of course, the authority of the poet Gray to the contrary, but his strictures unquestionably arose from the intense dislike with which he ever regarded the study of mathematics, which then, more so than now, was the staple of the study pursued there. The accounts, for example, which both Richard Cumberland and Richard Watson (Bishop of Llandaff) have respectively

[1] *Hist. Univ. Oxford*, p. 177.

left of their careers as undergraduates at Trinity College between the years 1754 and 1759, are very satisfactory. What the latter feared would tend to the superiority of the sister University over Cambridge, and would ultimately reduce its scholastic exercises to the same 'miserable state' as that in which theirs had long been, was what he calls the 'evil custom of dining late.' 'When I was admitted,' he says, 'and for many years after, every college dined at twelve o'clock, and the students after dinner flocked to the philosophical disputations which began at two.' The writer remembered to have seen 'the divinity schools flocked with auditors from top to bottom—which might justly be called a real academic entertainment.' [1]

Gilbert Wakefield, a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, who avowed himself a warm admirer of Dr. Knox's writings, censures him on account of applying his strictures on his own *alma mater* to that of Cambridge. The account which he gives of his studies during the five years and a half he passed at Jesus, 1772–78, is a favourable one. What he considered to be the chief defects in the University system were, as might be expected, 'the impolicy and injustice of excluding such a numerous portion of society by ecclesiastical restrictions from the emoluments and conveniences' which it had to offer; the practice of nominating tutors to their office upon no other ground than that of seniority; the length of morning and evening prayers, the ludicrous indecorum attendant on which branch of discipline, especially on winter mornings, in his opinion was more truly descriptive of a reality than a stanza in a parody of Gray's 'Elegy' (Duncombe's 'Evening Contemplation in a College'):

> Haply some friend may shake his hoary head,
> And say, 'Each morn, unchill'd by frosts he ran,
> With hose ungartered, o'er yon turfy bed,
> To reach the chapel ere the psalms began;

the late hour for dinner (which then concluded the labours of the day); and the constitution of King's College.[2]

But while Granta's bowers were haunted by many warm

[1] *Life of Bishop Watson*, p. 22. [2] *Memoirs*, i. 149–55.

with learning's sacred flame, her bowers were frequented by many who were certainly not learned, nor even of a studious disposition, and who had no wish to be. Class honours, medals, fellowships, and declamation prizes did not lie within the scope of their ambition. The celebrated William Wilberforce proceeded to Cambridge at the early age of seventeen, and was admitted in October 1776 to St. John's College. Detailing some of his college experiences late in life to a very intimate friend, Dr. John Harford, he said :—

> On the very first night of my arrival I was introduced to as licentious a set of men as can well be conceived. They were in the habit of drinking hard, and their conversation was in perfect accordance with their principles. Though often mingling in their parties I never relished their society—indeed, I was often horror-struck at their conduct and felt miserable.

After the first term Wilberforce shook off his connection with this set, and found himself in that which he innocently supposed would prove a more congenial society—the Fellows of St. John's College :—

> What the society of fellows of the colleges may be now, I know not; but the set that I became intimate with at St. John's neither acted the part of Christians nor even of honest men to me. Their object seemed to be to make and keep me idle. If I occasionally appeared studious they would say to me, 'Why in the world should a man of your fortune trouble himself with fagging?' . . . and parties with the fellows and other amusements consumed my time.[1]

These strictures tend to confirm Bishop Watson's regret at the collegiate custom of dining late. He noticed that in the Divinity Schools no sooner did the clock strike three than a number of masters of arts who were members of colleges which dined at three slunk away from the intellectual feast therein provided. 'And they were followed, as might have been expected, by many undergraduates—I say, as might have been expected—for in all seminaries of education, relaxation of discipline begins with the seniors of the society.'[2]

Discipline must have been sadly relaxed at Trinity Hall in

[1] Harford's *Recollections of Wilberforce*, pp. 199–200.
[2] *Life of Bishop Watson*, pp. 22–3.

1786, when such an occurrence as the following could pass not only unnoticed but uncensured :—

> One of the fellow-commoners had taken his degree and was about to quit college, which event they celebrated in the following manner :—
>
> After supper they brought into the centre of the court all the hampers they could find filled with straw, on the top of which they placed his tables, and on these they set the chairs, and the whole was surmounted by his cap, gown, and surplice ; they then set fire to the hampers, and with loud shouts danced round the whole till it was consumed.[1]

Nothing strikes the observant eye of the visitor to Cambridge to-day more forcibly than the air of cleanliness which the town wears. Far different was it even so late as 1794. The streets were a positive disgrace alike to the town and to the University :—

> The gutters were in the middle of the streets, in several of which it was impossible for two carriages to pass each other on account of the encroachments that had been made. Along the whole front of Pembroke College was a watercourse, which divided the street into two very unequal parts. The west side was, by necessity, the carriage road, but was only one-third the width of the road which adjoined the college, and was appropriated to foot-passengers. The sides of the channel were boarded, and it was crossed by two very narrow bridges, one opposite the master's lodge, the other opposite the gates of the college. The principal inn at that time was the Cardinal's Cap, situated in the middle of the space now occupied by the Pitt Press. It happened not unfrequently that gentlemen's coachmen who were strangers to the town mistook the road between the college and the watercourse for the carriage-road, in consequence of which there was often much confusion, and occasionally accidents occurred.[2]

Gunning was unable to conceive how any family could have brought themselves to reside in Cambridge, out of preference, during the first half of the reign of George III. The gownsmen, he says, when they encountered the townsfolk in the dimly-lighted streets of the town, exhibited scarcely less ferocity than members of the Mohocks and Hell Fire societies are said to have done. People who dared to carry bull's-eye lanterns

[1] Gunning, *Reminiscences of Cambridge*, i. 39-40.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 319.

were invariably insulted, and often were forced to submit to the loss of them.[1]

Although it may be a digression from the subject with which we are more immediately concerned, a few general remarks on the social life of the two great educational centres of the kingdom in the eighteenth century may not be without interest.

At both Oxford and Cambridge, the undergraduates dressed regularly for dinner in white waistcoats, white stockings, low shoes, and wore their wigs fully combed, curled, and powdered.[2] A powdering room was to be found in every well-regulated college. James Harris (afterwards Earl of Malmesbury) has left on record that the life in the first part of the reign of George III., at Merton College, Oxford, was 'an imitation of high life in London. Luckily, drinking was not the fashion; but what we did drink was claret, and we had our regular round of evening card parties, to the great derangement of our finances.' Clubs were strong in both the Universities. Gunning, in his entertaining 'Reminiscences of Cambridge,' alludes to a club existing in Cambridge in 1790, which consisted of twelve members, who wore coats of bright green, lined and bound with buff silk, with buttons made expressly, and upon which 'Sans Souci' was elegantly engraved; the waistcoat, curiously adorned with frogs, was buff, with knee breeches of the same colour. The members met at each other's rooms one evening in the week, when they played for very high stakes; they also dined together once a month, when each member was allowed to invite a friend; and in conclusion they had a grand anniversary.

There were several clubs in existence at this time at Oxford. John Newton, writing of Canning's sojourn at Oxford, says that in the year 1787 a debating club was established at Christchurch, the members of which were the Hon. Robert Banks Jenkinson, afterwards Lord Liverpool, George Canning, Lord Henry Spencer, Sir William Drummond (sometime British ambassador at Constantinople) Charles Goddard, and Newton himself.

[1] For evidence of the condition of the streets of Oxford at this time see *Malmesbury Correspondence*, i. 271.

[2] Pryme's *Autob. Rec.* p. 44.

This club, in which were heard the first speeches ever composed by Lord Liverpool and Canning, met every Thursday evening at the rooms of the members, who were at its establishment limited to the number of six. Before their separation they voted and recorded the question which they were to debate on the ensuing Thursday evening. Sometimes they appeared at dinner in the hall dressed in their uniform, which was a brown coat, of rather an uncommon shade, with velvet cuffs and collar, the buttons bearing the initials of Demosthenes, Cicero, Pitt, and Fox. As the young orators were always as mute as the grave on all that concerned their institution, the anxiety which their fellow-collegians evinced to discover the meaning of their peculiar uniform was considerable. The club was dissolved in 1788.[1]

At the time when Gray was admitted to Peter House, Cambridge, Jacobitism and hard drinking still greatly prevailed in all grades of University society, much to the prejudice not only of good manners but also of good letters. A spirit of playing tricks upon freshmen was at this time very marked. Few men took the trouble to preserve a character for sobriety. 'The still air of delightful studies,' as Milton has it, was often broken by exhibitions of rough horse-play, and by much dissipation and extravagance. There was an absence of those arts which soften, refine, and embellish the intercourse of social life, an absence of rational and scholarly amusements that might have afforded a retreat, if necessary, from the bottle.

The regular academic costume, so late as 1799, consisted of knee breeches, of any colour, and white stockings. The sun of wigs had not even then set; they covered the craniums of nearly all dons and heads of houses. The gentlemen wore their hair tied up behind in a thin loop called a pigtail; footmen wore their hair tied up behind in a thick loop called a hoop.

Professor Pryme, speaking of his first year at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1799, states that in his uncle's time (1782) the dinner hour had been at noon, but was then at a quarter-past

[1] Newton's *Early Days of Canning*, pp. 6-9.

two o'clock in term time, on account of the disputations in the Mathematical Schools commencing at three o'clock. Some years after, it was altered; the hour of the Schools was changed to twelve, and that of the dinner to four o'clock.

Our habits (says he) were to take some relaxation after dinner, to go to chapel at half-past five, then retire to our rooms, shut the outer door, take tea, and read till ten or eleven o'clock. There was supper in the hall at a quarter before nine, but very few partook of it. On Sundays we dined at a quarter-past one, and the afternoon university sermon at St. Mary's, which was well attended by the students, was at three o'clock. The Vice-Chancellor's weekly dinner parties were at half-past one, and all his company attended him to St. Mary's.[1]

At that time there were two coffee-houses in the town of Cambridge, where the gownsmen used to take their tea or coffee on summer evenings when there was no fire in their rooms. One was kept by a man named Smith, in Bridge Street, opposite the Round Church, and the other was in a room, set apart for the purpose, at the Rose Inn, facing the Market Place.

Hard drinking was the besetting sin of University society in the last century, both at Oxford and Cambridge, though more particularly the latter. To this both Henry Gunning, who was Esquire Bedell from 1789, and George Pryme, who was not only Professor of Political Economy, but thrice represented the borough at St. Stephen's, bear their emphatic testimony :—

Buzzing (says the latter), unknown in the present day, was then universal. When the decanter came round to anyone, if it was nearly emptied, the next in succession could require him to finish it; but if the quantity left exceeded the bumper, the challenger was obliged to drink the remainder, and also a bumper out of the next fresh bottle. There was throughout these parties an endeavour to make each other drunk, and a pride in being able to resist the effects of the wine.[2]

What the Oxford undergraduate's drinking propensities were in the reign of George I. may be inferred from what Dr. Johnson told Boswell on their tour in Scotland in 1773. 'I

[1] Pryme's *Autob. Rec.* p. 42.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 41. For evidence of the hard drinking at Oxford about the same period see Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*, i. 53.

remember, when at Pembroke College, drinking three bottles of port at a sitting, without feeling much the worse after it.'

The recreations of the gownsmen at the two Universities were much about the same. The chief appear to have been battledore and shuttlecock, bell ringing, swinging on the rope, in their own rooms ; leap-frog, tag, hop-step-and-jump, and skittles,[1] riding and racing horses, against which the authorities set their faces, betting, fox-hunting (an expensive amusement which was enjoyed by only a few), cock-fighting, swimming, fishing, and pond-netting.

It is a fact worthy of special notice that boating on the river at Oxford so late as 1790, and at Cambridge so late as 1799, was not a customary exercise.[2] An Oxford tutor named Cox, who published some interesting reminiscences of that University little more than a quarter of a century since, states that in the closing years of the eighteenth century, although racing had not been thought of, a very favourite amusement among the Oxford undergraduates was that of riding against time from the university city to the capital, a distance of one hundred and eight miles, in twelve hours or less, with relays of horses at regular intervals.

[1] Wordsworth's *Social Life at Eng. Univs.* 166.
[2] Pryme's *Autob. Rec.* p. 43 ; Cox's *Recollections of Oxford*, p. 31.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## THE LITERARY WORLD.

The Augustan era of English literature—Its rise and wane—Evil consequences of Government patronage of authors—Miseries of literary life in London under the first Georges—Samuel Boyse—Dancing attendance upon the great—Private patronage—Publishing by subscription—Fulsome dedications—Laureate odes—Magazines and reviews—Circulating libraries and reading societies—Goldsmith's castigation of Chinese tales and English tours—Eighteenth-century novels—Pamphlets—The Fourth Estate—Sketch of its history—Dr. Johnson as a reporter—Advertisements—The provincial press—Anonymity and *noms-de-guerre.*

It was long customary to style the first quarter of the age under review the Augustan era of English literature, by reason of a resemblance in point of intellectual activity which was supposed to exist between it and the lettered ease of society in the capital of the Roman empire under the beneficent sway of the Emperor Augustus. Modern critics, however, have been unable to endorse this verdict in its entirety, for the simple reason that it expresses only a general truth. If the term Augustan must be held to imply that those who devoted themselves to the literary profession in England during the twelve years which comprise the reign of Queen Anne constantly received signal marks of the royal favour and protection, that the civil power stooped to flatter that order of men by their familiarity and by a system of rewards, that they were in a position to command the universal admiration and respect of their fellow-men, and that both they and their works engrossed a far greater amount of public attention than had hitherto been similarly bestowed upon them, then assuredly the epithet Augustan loses none of its force. But if, on the other hand, it is sought to institute a comparison in point of literary excel-

lence, as, for example, between Horace and Pope, or between Addison and Cicero, the epithet Augustan is inapplicable. The resemblance is most imperfect. 'It will scarcely be denied by its greatest admirer,' observes the most recent critic of eighteenth-century literature, 'if he be a man of wide reading, that it cannot be ranked with the poorest of the five great ages of literature.'[1] Taking all things into consideration, it must be conceded that the reign of Anne was undoubtedly the brightest period in the literary annals of the eighteenth century, and was literally the golden age for authors. The Government seemed to take a pride in lavishing lucrative appointments and honours upon literary merit with unsparing hand. The pathway to fame and emolument was one that lay broad and straight to all who evinced adroitness and skill in literary composition. Stars, coronets, mitres, earldoms, garters, white staves and black rods —these then constituted the rewards of literature. The representative English men of letters, of whom the chief contributors to the 'Spectator,' the 'Tatler,' and the 'Guardian' most readily present themselves to the mind, differed little if at all from those who in their day moved in the first ranks of wit, genius, and fashion. In the gayest of attire they congregated at the coffee-houses and the clubs in St. James's and St. Paul's Churchyard, frequented the playhouses, and were cordially welcomed at the residences of the *haut ton* in St. James's Square and Hatton Garden. At the proper seasons they were to be seen drinking the waters at Epsom or parading the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells. Occasionally they were to be met with in the *salons* of Paris and Vienna, surrounded by crowds of admirers, and basking in the full sunshine of 'the favour of great men.' Matthew Prior was despatched abroad in the capacity of an ambassador, Joseph Addison was appointed Secretary of State, Jonathan Swift was promoted to the deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin; while Congreve, Hughes, Rowe, Philips, Parnell, Stepney, and many others were all comfortably provided for. Places and appointments seemed to exist for no other reason than to be conferred upon the servants of the Nine, in order that they might take their ease, eat, drink and be merry.

[1] Gosse, *Hist. of Eighteenth Century Literature*, p. 398.

This Augustan age was, however, destined to be of but short duration. Not a great while after the first prince of the House of Hanover ascended the throne, Sir Robert Walpole, a man who displayed as much regard for the welfare of authors and for the production of literature as his royal master, which was practically none at all, assumed the reins of government, and simultaneously the profession of letters perceptibly declined and entered upon a long course of depression and neglect. To the balmy breezes of prosperity had succeeded the chilling blasts of adversity. The eyes of authors now no longer waited upon prospects of Government advancement, but inclined rather towards individual patronage. As yet the public either would not or could not afford the expense of books, and all appeals fell flat upon its dull cold ear. Ministers had no more bishoprics, deaneries, canonries, rich livings, commissionerships, envoys, or secretaryships-of-state to bestow upon that class of men who adopted literature as their profession. All these things were now reserved for a fierce, hungry set of politicians in return for their votes and interest. Meanwhile the lives of the members of the brotherhood of letters were to be assailed by five ills, which, as enumerated by Dr. Johnson, who experienced nearly all of them, were 'toil, envy, want, the garret, and the jail.' True it is that there were some *literati* who were exceptions to this rule, but so few in number were they, that it is possible to count them on the fingers of a single hand. An extraordinary stroke of good luck enabled Alexander Pope to realise by the sale of his writings sufficient to enable him to pass his declining years in ease and independence; Edward Young, the author of the 'Night Thoughts,' entered into holy orders late in life, was presented by his college to a country benefice, and subsequently secured for himself a pension; the merits of James Thomson, who sang the 'Seasons' and their change, were rewarded by an annuity of 100*l.*, and by the governorship-general of the Leeward Islands, from which he received about 300*l.* per annum, but he did not obtain this until he had drained to the dregs the bitter cup of literary misery; Samuel Richardson, the novelist, amassed a competency by his printing establishment. As for the rest—the

minor bards, pamphleteers, and reviewers, and those who belong to the category of miscellaneous writers—their condition, roughly speaking, from the accession of George I., in 1714, to the death of his successor in 1760, was pitiable in the extreme. The individual who 'for gain, not glory,' devoted himself to literature while such a post as that of parish dustman or shoeblack remained vacant, would have been pronounced by his candid friends a fit and proper candidate for Bedlam; nor is it any wonder, seeing that its wages even to a man of great genius, and possessed with the faculty of turning that genius to the best account, were barely sufficient to keep body and soul together. Sooner or later, he found his way to the cocklofts of Drury Lane, or to Grub Street, near Moorfields, the classic grounds of destitute authors, who there eked out an existence so miserable that the very names of these localities passed into synonyms for misery and hunger. How far this is true, the record of the life of Samuel Johnson will amply reveal. Turning his back upon the profession of a teacher, Johnson journeyed up to the metropolis in 1737, and in the following year was enrolled on the staff of contributors to the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' which, as Boswell said, 'for many years was his principal source of employment and support.' The solitude, the pain of heart, the distress, and the poverty with which he contended, and the severe reverses of fortune that he endured, were the common lot of all the knights of the pen, good, bad, and indifferent, at this time. In language which has been often quoted, but which never wearies by repetition, one of the greatest of English essayists has limned the miseries attendant on the lives of the authors who wrote for bread, the direct descendants of those who wrote for preferment:—

> All that is squalid and miserable might now be summed up in the word 'poet.' That word denoted a creature dressed like a scarecrow, familiar with Compters and spunging houses, and perfectly qualified to decide on the comparative merits of the common side in the King's Bench Prison, and of Mount Scoundrel in the Fleet. Even the poorest pitied him, and they well might pity him. For if their condition was equally abject, their aspirings were not equally high, nor their sense of insult equally acute. To lodge in a garret up four pair of stairs, to dine in a cellar among footmen

out of place, to translate ten hours a day for the wages of a ditcher, to be hunted by bailiffs from one haunt of beggary and pestilence to another, from Grub Street to St. George's Fields, and from St. George's Fields to the alleys behind St. Martin's Church, to sleep on a bulk in June and amidst the ashes of a glasshouse in December, to die in a hospital and to be buried in a parish vault, was the fate of more than one writer who, if he had lived thirty years earlier, would have been admitted to the sittings of the Kitcat or the Scriblerus Club, would have sat in Parliament and would have been entrusted with embassies to the High Allies. Who, if he had lived in our time, would have received from the booksellers several hundred pounds a year.[1]

Destitute of a bed, the poor author, having toiled all day at scribbling epigrams, satires, eulogiums, or moral essays, during the summer's heat commonly found a dormitory upon a shop bulk, where, if not cognisant of it already, he soon realised the truth of the old saw, that 'misery makes a man acquainted with strange bedfellows,'—reposed thereon by the side of some homeless wanderer or belated wine-bibber reeling from the tavern, there to dream of ease and comfort, or to watch the sentinel stars fading one by one, till the rising sun ushered in another day of penury and toil. Savage was compelled to lie many a time and oft upon a bulk; Oldys tells us that it was on one in Clare Market that Nathaniel Lee expired while returning from the orgies of the Bear and Harrow, in Butcher Row, to his lodging in Duke Street; while Derrick, being discovered upon one, by Floyd, exclaimed, 'My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state; will you go home with me to my lodging?' Assuredly, if those bulks had been endowed with the power of speech, they could have unfolded a tale that would have frozen the ink on the pages of a Fielding or a Smollett. When every effort to secure a patron resulted in failure (as was frequently the case) poor authors thankfully accepted any kind of work which could be called literary. To concoct sermons for divines who were too lazy or too incompetent to write them themselves—to translate and to annotate the works of the great master spirits of classical antiquity for the booksellers—to prepare prefaces and prologues—to compile indexes and almanacs, or to turn a Persian tale for half-a-crown—to indite an

[1] Lord Macaulay, *Edin. Rev.* vol. liv. p. 23.

occasional ode or political satire—to contribute puffs of worthless novels to the magazines and reviews, or of quack nostrums to the newspapers—these were some of the ways in which the distressed brethren of the literary craft exercised their brains and pens. That day was one ever to be marked with a white stone on which they received a notification of the acceptance of some twaddling article from the editor of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' Maddened by the pangs of hunger, they had recourse to gin, nor could they leave their garrets to procure this solace without the fear of sheriffs' officers before their eyes. Sunday was the only day upon which the vigilant catchpolls rested from their labours, and then the hapless bard might steal forth from his den, and snatch a fearful joy in accepting the hospitality of some kind-hearted bookseller. Still fortune did not always leave the literary craft comfortless. She befriended it occasionally, but when she did so, extravagance and abominable improvidence were almost invariably the result; for there was no precept which distressed authors at this time more literally fulfilled than that of taking no thought for the morrow, and allowing the morrow to take care for the things of itself. Of this in the record of the life of Samuel Boyse and in that of Richard Savage (whom in many respects he greatly resembled), there is an abundance of evidence. Of Boyse it is recorded that, during his career in London, although he had no taste for anything in particular, he yet was to the last degree extravagant. Often when a guinea had been bestowed upon him in charity, the poet would step into a tavern, order a dinner or supper for himself, with a bottle of the richest and most expensive wine that the establishment afforded, utterly callous to the needs of his wretched wife and children starving at home in a Grub Street garret, the internal economy of which bore a strong resemblance to Hogarth's typical representation of it in his 'Distressed Poet.' In 1740 the biography of Boyse relates that he was reduced to such a state of misery that

he had not a shirt, a coat, or any kind of apparel to put on, the sheets in which he lay were carried to the pawnbroker's, and he was obliged to be confined to bed with no other covering than a blanket. He sat up in bed with the blanket wrapped about him,

through which he had cut a hole large enough to admit his arm, and placing the paper upon his knee, scribbled in the best manner he could the verses he was obliged to make.

The poet's acquaintance with Sylvanus Urban (Cave) of the 'Gentleman's Magazine' brought him into contact with Johnson, who informed Nichols the antiquary that he once collected a sum of money to redeem Boyse's clothes which he had pawned, and which before another two days had elapsed were pawned again. Boyse could make respectable translations from the French language; but if a bookseller ever enlisted his services for such work the original copy was pawned before he commenced the second sheet of the translation. If the bookseller redeemed it, the translator would proceed with a second sheet and then the same thing would happen again. Thrown into a Poultry spunging house in 1742, he sent a letter to the editor of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' beseeching his aid :—

I am every moment threatened to be turned out here (he wrote), because I have not money to pay for my bed two nights past, which is usually paid beforehand; and I am loth to go into the Compter till I can see if my affairs can possibly be made up. I hope, therefore, you will have the humanity to send me half a guinea for support, till I finish your papers in my hands. I humbly entreat your answer, having not tasted anything since Tuesday evening I came here, and my coat will be taken off my back for the charge of the bed.

Worn out with poverty and disease, this truly unfortunate child of genius died in May 1749 in a garret in Shoe Lane, and was interred at the expense of the parish. Through a life similar to this passed most of those who achieved fame in English literature before the accession of George III. 'Slow rises worth by poverty depressed,' wrote Johnson, and truer words were never penned. Samuel Johnson, concealed behind the screen, looking forward to the pot luck of Mr. Cave's establishment—Samuel Johnson pacing with Savage the streets during the silent watches of the night, cold, hungry, and comfortless—Samuel Johnson scraping a few shillings together to redeem the garments of the spendthrift Boyse—was a type of the race of the literary men of England whose names are now revered, whose works are now admired, during the first three

quarters of the eighteenth century, as with slow and painful steps they climbed the steep ascent 'where Fame's proud temple shines afar.'

The dramatic writings of Samuel Foote embody many of the marked characteristics of the manners prevalent during his time. In his comedy of 'The Author' he lays bare some of the secrets of the literary profession, though fully charged, as may be supposed, with caricature.

'Books are like women' (says one character, Mr. Vamp, a bookseller, to another character, Mr. Cape); 'to strike they must be well-dressed; fine feathers make fine birds; a good paper, an elegant type, a handsome motto, and a catching title, has drove many a dull treatise through three editions. Did you know Harry Nandy?' 'Not that I recollect.' 'He was a pretty fellow. He had his Latin *ad unguem*, as they say; he would have turn'd you a fable of Dryden's or an epistle of Pope's into Latin verse in a twinkling; except Peter Hasty, the voyage writer, he was as great a loss to the trade as any within my memory.' 'What carried him off?' 'A halter.' 'Were you a great loser by his death?' 'I can't say; as he had taken to another course of living, his execution made a noise; it sold me seven hundred of his translation, besides his last dying speech and confession.' 'You have no farther commands, Mr. Vamp?' 'Not at present; about the spring I'll deal with you, if we can agree for a couple of volumes in octavo. Master Cape knows what will do, though. Novels are a pretty light summer reading and do very well at Tunbridge, Bristol, and the other watering places; no bad commodity for the West India trade either?'

Mr. Cape, an author, undertakes to introduce Mr. Sprightly, a friend, to his bookseller, Mr. Vamp, when the following conversation takes place :—

*Cape.* This gentleman is a friend.
*Vamp.* An author?
*Cape.* Voluminous.
*Vamp.* In what way?
*Cape.* Universal.
*Vamp.* Bless me! he's very young, and exceedingly well-rigged; what a good subscription, I reckon.
*Cape.* Not a month from Leyden; an admirable theologist; he study'd it in Germany. If you should want such a thing now as ten or a dozen manuscript sermons by a deceased clergyman, I believe he can supply you.

Aspirants to literary distinction had to pass through the trying ordeal commonly known as dancing attendance upon

the great—in other words, of obtaining an audience of some purse-proud nobleman or wealthy parvenu who had gained or arrogated to himself the reputation of being a patron of literature, for the purpose of securing his name and subscription to some work, brimful of 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn,' poetical or prose, that they were desirous of publishing. Having selected a man of title for the purpose, and having duly bribed his confidential footman or valet-de-chambre (sometimes both) with as many half-crowns as he could spare or borrow, the poor author received permission from these august functionaries to take up his stand at the door of the mansion or in the hall. There, with lowly patience, he would wait until such times as 'my lord' proceeded to his carriage or chair, when he would crawl forward, pluck him gently by the sleeve and with divers apologies, hems and haws, thrust a proposal into his hand, or implore a subscription, however trifling, to a forthcoming volume of poetical lucubrations, dignified with some such title as 'Grass from Parnassus,' 'Thoughts on Man,' or a 'View of Universal History from the Creation to the Present Time,' in three volumes, octavo. Sometimes he succeeded in obtaining a trifling mark of the great man's generosity, though more often may we not reasonably suppose that hope deferred which maketh the heart sick. But, whatever he received in the shape of gratuity from the great man, much or less, that was he expected to repay a thousand-fold in flattery.

Oliver Goldsmith throws out several hints in regard to the devices to which poverty-stricken knights of the pen were compelled to resort, in two of those amusing letters which he contributed to a London paper known as the 'Public Ledger,' under the signature 'A Citizen of the World.' Numbers 29 and 30 contain a description of the members and proceedings of a club of authors which met at the sign of the Broom, near Islington, where the supposed authors (of whom some were doubtless drawn from life) met together and aired their grievances, of which booksellers and the illiberality of the nobility formed the chief. 'The whole club,' we are told, 'seemed to join in condemning the season as one of the worst

that had come for some time: a gentleman particularly observed that the nobility were never known to subscribe worse than at present.' A little man present, favouring the company with his experiences, told them that 'upon the arrival of a certain noble duke from his travels, he set himself down, and vamped up a fine flaunting poetical panegyric, written in such a strain that he thought it would have wheedled milk from a mouse':—

> In this I represented the whole kingdom welcoming his grace to his native soil, not forgetting the loss France and Italy would sustain by his departure. I expected to touch for a bank bill at least; so folding up my verses in gilt paper, I gave my last half-crown to a genteel servant to be the bearer. My letter was safely conveyed to his grace, and the servant, after four hours' absence, during which time I led the life of a fiend, returned with a letter four times as big as mine. Guess my ecstasy at the prospect of so fine a return. I eagerly took the packet into my hands, that trembled to receive it. I kept it some time unopened before me, brooding over the expected treasure it contained; when opening it, as I expect to be saved, gentlemen, his grace had sent me in payment for my poem, no bank bills, but six copies of verse, each longer than mine, addressed to him on the same occasion.[1]

Samuel Johnson published his annotated edition of Shakespeare's Plays by subscription. Writing to his friend Dr. Charles Burney, of Lynn, under date of March 1, 1758, he says:—

> I am ashamed to tell you that my Shakespeare will not be out so soon as I promised my subscribers, but I did not promise them more than I promised myself. It will, however, be published before summer. . . . I have sent you a bundle of proposals, which I think do not profess more than I have hitherto performed. . . . I have likewise enclosed twelve receipts; not that I mean to impose upon you the trouble of pushing them with more importunity than may seem proper, but that you may rather have more than fewer than you shall want.

Weeks, months, and years passed away before the long-looked-for edition of Shakespeare's Plays was announced as ready for publication, and during that time the proud and struggling editor was forced to endure the slings and arrows of

[1] *Goldsmith's Works*, ed. Cunningham, ii. 185.

Charles Churchill's satire as well as his base insinuations as to his honesty of purpose. 'He for subscribers baits his hook,' wrote Churchill, 'And takes your cash, but where's the book?

> No matter where; wise fear you know,
> Forbids the robbing of a foe;
> But what to serve our private ends,
> Forbids the cheating of our friends?

Well might the surly moralist observe, when in after years he had reached the highest rung of the literary ladder, that 'he that asks subscriptions soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him defame him.

Mention has already been made of the dedications which at this time were usually prefixed by authors to their works. This custom (which had originated in the laudable and perfectly natural desire on the part of a writer to associate his work with the name of some intimate friend, or with that of one who had generously befriended him), came in the eighteenth century to be most shamefully abused, the consequence being that there was scarcely a work that issued from the press which was not furnished with a preface, often nearly half as bulky as the work itself, and a fulsome dedication, couched in a strain of grovelling eulogy, addressed to some person 'of quality.' An intelligent foreigner who, in utter ignorance of the fact that nine-tenths of the English people of quality in the eighteenth century were either knaves or fools, diligently perused a number of these dedications, which have been quietly consigned by subsequent times to the vault of all the Capulets, might well be excused in regretting the demise of an age apparently so replete with exemplary, not to say saintly, characters. Assuredly if the Mæcenases of the age had been possessed of an ounce of common sense they would never have countenanced these lavish eulogies and fulsome plaudits. Even the poet Young—he who could act the severest moralist in his verses—disgraced his talents and lowered his reputation by reason of the flattery with which he occasionally stuffed the dedications to his poems, a failing in his character which the acuteness of Swift was not slow to notice, seeing that he did not scruple to affirm that the poet was compelled

to torture his invention,
To flatter knaves or lose his pension.

A typical specimen of Young's dedications is subjoined. The original of it will be found prefixed to his 'Paraphrase on Part of the Book of Job':—

To the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Parker, Baron of Macclesfield, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, &c., &c. My Lord,—Though I have not the honour of being known to your Lordship, I presume to take a privilege which men of retirement are apt to think themselves in possession of, as being the only method they have of making their way to persons of your Lordship's high station without struggling through multitudes for access. I may possibly fail in my respect for your Lordship, even while I endeavour to show it most; but if I err it is because I imagined I ought not to make my first approach to one of your Lordship's exalted character *with less ceremony than that of a dedication.* It is annexed to the condition of eminent merit not to suffer more from the malice of its enemies than from the importunity of its admirers; and perhaps it would be unjust that your Lordship should hope to be exempted from the troubles, when you possess all the talents of a patron, &c.

It is unnecessary to multiply examples. Bright and honourable exceptions to the general rule of dedications are those of Dr. Johnson (who informed Boswell upon one occasion that 'he believed he had dedicated to the Royal Family all round'), but these exceptions prove only the rule. The greater the reward expected, the higher was the key of flattery pitched. From highest to lowest, every member of the literary craft was at this time compelled to flatter, cringe, bow down to and worship 'the great.' Was he poet laureate to the king, the very odes which he addressed to his Majesty on his birthday, on New Year's Day, on his marriage, on his recovery from sickness, on any occasion whatsoever, must all be highly seasoned with compliments, far-fetched comparisons, and flattering encomiums. One of the worst offenders in this respect was Colley Cibber, who succeeded the Reverend Laurence Eusden—a most unblushing flatterer of royalty—in the laureateship, which he held from 1730 to 1757, and whose official poetry, it has been justly remarked, was so bad and so fulsome as to disgrace, not only its author, but the times that could endure it. Take as a specimen the following extract from his 'Ode for his Majesty's Birthday,' set to music

by Dr. Boyce, and sung in the presence of the King and his Court by Messrs. Wass, Baildon, Savage, and Beard in 1755 :—

> Pierian sisters hail the morn
> That gave the world a Cæsar born,
> Born to his people's love ; the flower
> That best adorns the brows of power ;
> Where'er this royal plant takes root,
> More glorious reaps the throne the fruit.
> What sweeter praise in realms above,
> What more divine can angels sing,
> Than that his grateful creatures love
> Their gracious lord, of kings the king?
> Such praises sung by truth may show
> How godlike kings are loved below.

This laudation was pronounced on a 'Cæsar' who possessed 'scarcely one quality, except personal courage and justice !'—on a 'Cæsar' in whose bosom 'avarice, the most unprincely of all passions, sat enshrined' ! Such rubbish is enough to make one ashamed of one's kind.

Of much about the same stamp was Cibber's 'Ode for the New Year' (1756), commencing thus :—

> While Britain in her monarch blest,
> Enjoys her heart's desire,
> Proud to avow that joy confest,
> Thus to her lord she strikes her lyre.
>
> . . . .
>
> Had the lyrist of old
> Had our Cæsar to sing,
> More rapid his raptures had rolled,
> But—never had Greece such a king !
>
> *Chorus.* No—never had Greece such a king !

These strains of adulation insensibly recall to mind that which Dean Swift anticipated, in his 'Rhapsody on Poetry,' as what might be expected from a servile bard who lied for hire and flattered for reward :—

> A prince the moment he is crowned
> Inherits all the virtues round. . . .
> Then, poet, if you mean to thrive,
> Employ your muse on kings alive.
> With prudence gathering up a cluster
> Of all the virtues you can muster,

Which formed into a garland sweet,
Lay humbly at your monarch's feet;
Who as the odours reach his throne,
Will smile and think them all his own.

The anniversary of George II.'s birthday in the same year (1756) elicited the customary laureate's ode. It began thus:—

Rejoice ye Britons, hail the day!
And consecrate to Cæsar's birth the lay;
*Cæsar with every virtue crowned,*
*And for the mildest reign renowned,*
With power paternal finds the art
Of winning to his will the heart.

It ended thus:—

Ah! late and glorious may he go
To heavenly realms resigned,
When long renowned below,
His godlike reign has blessed mankind![1]

William Whitehead, being called upon in 1767 to celebrate in verse the anniversary of his royal master's birthday, June 4, produced an ode from which the following lines are extracted:—

Friend to the poor—for sure, O king,
That godlike attribute is thine—
Friend to the poor; to thee we sing,
To thee our annual offerings bring,
And bend at mercy's shrine.

It would puzzle the most ingenious commentator to explain the exact meaning of the last line.

Thomas Warton's ode, written in 1789, on the recovery of George III. from his severe illness, is spoilt by this rodomontade:—

When Albion towering in the van sublime
Of Glory's march from clime to clime,
Envied, beloved, revered, renowned,
Her brows with every blissful chaplet bound,
When in her mid career of State,
She felt her monarch's awful fate!
*Till mercy from th' Almighty throne. . . .*
*To transport turned a people's fears*
*And stayed a people's tide of tears,*

[1] *Gent.'s Mag.* 1755, 1756, 1757.

Bade this blest dawn with beams auspicious spring
With hope serene, with healing on its wing,
And gave a sovereign o'er a grateful land,
Again with vigorous grasp to stretch the sceptered hand.

It may well be credited that the nation sympathised with the royal sufferer to a very great extent, but the assertions contained in the seventh, eighth, and ninth lines of the foregoing, after every possible allowance has been made on the score of poetic license, amount to utter nonsense and nothing else.

Royalty lived in a perfect shower-bath of adulation and panegyric. Copies of the odes from which citations have been made were invariably inserted in all the leading magazines and newspapers of the period, and no doubt at the time of their appearance were greatly admired, but now languish in that richly-merited oblivion to which better taste and sounder sense have long since united in relegating them.

To all the degradations and miseries which hedged the literary character under the first Georges must be added the invitations to come and read their works at an assembly of critics with which distressed brethren of the craft would sometimes be favoured by the patrons of literature. Fully cognisant of the fact that it was an invitation to pass through a burning fiery furnace, the poor author well knew that the invitation was tantamount to a command, and that to refuse was more than he could dare to do. Accepting the invitation, the bard would don his faded and tawdry attire, repair to the rich man's drawing-room, and there read aloud his work, amidst the nods, the winks, the shoulder-shruggings, the sarcasm, the 'guffaws,' and the never-ending sneers in which it was the wont of Mæcenas and his company to indulge on such occasions. The flagrant abuse of dancing attendance on the great was one that did not escape the notice of William Hogarth, who, in the second scene of his series of pictures illustrating the 'Rake's Progress,' has depicted, lying on the carpeted floor of the apartment, a poem dedicated to the youthful spendthrift, and a poor poet, haggard and careworn, waiting patiently in the rear for the honour of his recognition.

Goldsmith's novel of the 'Vicar of Wakefield' contains a

sly hit at the patronage system. The philosophic vagabond, George Primrose, recounting his adventures, is made to say that

as he was meditating one day in a London coffee-house on one of his paradoxes, a little man happened to enter the room and place himself in the box before him, and after some preliminary discourse, finding him to be a scholar, drew out a bundle of proposals, and begged him to subscribe to an annotated edition of Propertius.

'This demand,' says the narrator, 'necessarily produced a reply

that I had no money; and that concession led him to inquire into the nature of my expectations. Finding that my expectations were just as great as my purse, 'I see,' cried he, 'you are unacquainted with the town; I'll teach you a part of it. Look at these proposals; upon these very proposals I have subsisted very comfortably for twelve years. The moment a nobleman returns from his travels, a Creolian from Jamaica, or dowager from her country seat arrives, I strike for a subscription. I first besiege their hearts with flattery and then pour in my proposals at the breach. If they subscribe readily the first time, I renew my request to beg a dedication fee. If they let me have that I smite them once more for engraving their coat-of-arms at the top. Thus,' continued he, 'I live by vanity and laugh at it. But between ourselves I am now too well known; I should be glad to borrow your face a bit. A nobleman of distinction has just returned from Italy; my face is familiar to his porter, but if you bring this copy of verses, my life for it you succeed, and we divide the spoil.'[1]

The publication of Johnson's Dictionary was as the cloud no bigger than a man's hand, heralding the downfall of the patronage system; and the indignant though dignified letter of wounded pride and surly independence which he wrote on February 7, 1755, to the courtly Earl of Chesterfield, who had professed much but had performed little for him at a time when he was friendless and unknown, was as the shrill blast of a trumpeter proclaiming in plain and unmistakable terms that the winter of individual patronage was past and that the summer of public patronage had begun :—

Seven years, my lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door, during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is

[1] *Vicar of Wakefield*, c. xx.

useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before. . . . Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, would have been kind, but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot employ it; till I am solitary and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it. . . . Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning I shall not be disappointed though I shall conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation. My lord, your lordship's most humble, most obedient servant, SAM. JOHNSON.

It had been a hard school. But the contempt which George I. and II. and Walpole had evinced for the profession of letters proved in the long run to have been its salvation, for it not only indirectly contributed to the emancipation of literature from state patronage, from the 'artificial encouragement of a vast system of bounties and premiums,' whereby alone 'the deficiency of the natural demand for literature' was supplied, but also to the elevation, not merely of the literary craft itself, but of everyone who was connected with it.

The reader might perhaps be led to suppose that they who devoted themselves to dramatic writing under the House of Brunswick fared better than other workers in the field of literature. They did nothing of the sort. Without the imprimatur of some patron's commendation, the chances of a play being so much as read, much less represented by a manager, were of the remotest, and to obtain even that demanded no small amount of effort to get into the good graces of footmen and butlers, by bribes and every other artifice. Conclusive evidence of this is furnished in Roderick Random's account of the life and adventures of Mr. Melopoyn, the dejected-looking poet whom he met in the Marshalsea Prison, which is probably a piece of autobiography, seeing that in 1740 Smollett journeyed to London, bringing with him the manuscript of a tragedy entitled 'The Regicide,' which was rejected by every theatrical manager to whom it was submitted.

Mr. Melopoyn came to town on the search for a patentee who would be likely to produce his play. To such a one, Mr. Supple, he was introduced, was received with great civility, and extracted a promise that he would read the play at the first opportunity. Days and weeks passed by and no communication reached him. He called and learned that the manager's eldest son having found the manuscript on the table carried it into the kitchen, where the cook, mistaking it for waste paper, employed it in singeing fowls upon the spit. Despairing of dramatic success, Mr. Melopoyn offered his services to a translator, but was refused, because translations had become as drugs in the literary market; to a printer of halfpenny ballads, but failed because his 'language was too high-flown, and of consequence not at all adapted to the capacity and taste of his customers.' Taking the hint, he adapted himself 'to the comprehension of vulgar readers,' the printer ventured the expense of paper and printing, and Mr. Melopoyn received as his share of the sale fourpence halfpenny. Habituating himself to Grub Street ways, he produced, during a spell of cloudy weather, a remarkable ghost story, on the profits of which he subsisted with comfort four weeks, produced pamphlets on other topics, but found a never-failing treasury in a well-timed murder. In the meantime he had re-written his tragedy and sent it to a manager, backed by a recommendation from a noble lord. After repeated delays he secured an audience of him, and then learned that he had not even glanced at it. Thereupon Mr. Melopoyn angrily demanded the manuscript back. 'Ay,' said he, in a theatrical tone, 'with all my heart.' Then pulling out a drawer of the bureau at which he sat, he took out a bundle and threw it upon a table that was near him, pronouncing the word 'There' with great disdain. 'I took it up,' said Mr. Melopoyn, 'and perceiving with some surprise that it was a comedy, told him it did not belong to me; upon which he offered me another, which I also disclaimed. A third was produced and rejected for the same reason. At length he pulled out a whole handful and spread them before me, saying, 'There are seven —take which you please—or take them all.' 'I singled out my own, and went away, struck dumb with admiration at what I had seen—not so much on account of his insolence as of the number of new plays, which from this circumstance I concluded were yearly offered to the stage.' After undergoing an infinite number of disappointments, Mr. Melopoyn's condition was rendered desperate by the death of his good friend the landlord, whose executors obtained a judgment against his effects, and turned him destitute into the streets, where at the suit of his tailor he was arrested and committed to the Marshalsea.

It must not be inferred from what has been said that the London booksellers of the eighteenth century were one and all a set of cruel taskmasters, who quaffed mead out of the skulls of authors. As a class they seem to have been generous in their

dealings with their clients. Such names as Jacob Tonson, Bernard Lintot, Robert Dodsley of Pall Mall, Edward Newbery of St. Paul's Churchyard, Cadell and Davies in the Strand, Thomas Lowndes of Fleet Street, the brothers Dilly (Charles and Edward) of the Poultry, John Almon of Pall Mall, judging from Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' and the 'Memoirs' of Stockdale and Cradock, the correspondence of Shenstone, Timperley's 'Anecdotes,' and other sources of information, where mention of them is made, were men of sterling integrity, upright and honourable in all their dealings. It is at the doors of the public that the blame of neglecting literary men should be laid, and not at those of the booksellers. It was only certain forms of literature that were saleable at all, and works in the departments of science, philosophy, divinity, philology, and archæology were not represented among these forms. The physical sciences had not yet begun their splendid and rapid march; consequently they had no literary interpreters.

One cogent reason why the publication of books at this time was so difficult lies in the fact that the number of readers was comparatively small. Even when those numbers increased, the costliness of such books as were mostly published prevented numbers of men and women who made some pretensions to cultivation from bestowing a thought upon them. The average price of quarto volumes published during the first half of the eighteenth century seems to have been twelve shillings; that of octavo volumes, between five and six shillings; and that of duodecimos between three shillings and half a crown. In the second half of the century these prices seem to have increased rather than decreased. The heretofore twelve-shilling quartos appear, so late as 1793, to have been sold at a guinea each, the six shilling octavos at half a guinea, and the half-crown duodecimos at four shillings. It was not until the ever-fertile brain of the booksellers had hit upon the expedient of subdividing colossal works into weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly parts, and of employing hawkers to hawk these parts in London and its environs, that the buying of books became in the least popular. John Nichols, in his repository of amusing 'Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century,'

quotes some curious particulars respecting the infancy of the serial publication system, from a rare pamphlet written by the Rev. Thomas Stackhouse, a learned, pious, but necessitous divine, successively curate of Richmond, Ealing, and Finchley, better known as the author of a 'History of the Bible.' This poor curate, in common with many of his reverend brethren, finding it impossible to keep the wolf from his door on the slender pittance which his curacy yielded, resolved to augment it by his pen, and with that end applied to several booksellers. In May 1732, 'when the success of some certain things published weekly set every little bookseller's wits to work,' two members of the fraternity, Messrs. Wilford and Edlin, signified to Stackhouse their wish to engage him 'to write something which might be published weekly, but what it was they knew not.'[1]

As booksellers at this time were in the habit of making all their bargains at taverns, this 'precious pair,' as Nichols calls them, appointed Stackhouse to meet them in the Castle Tavern, Paternoster Row. 'Edlin decided in favour of a revival of Ozell's "Roman History," with a little brushing up'—that is to say, an infusion of some life and spirit into the author's heavy style. From that Wilford strongly dissented. Devotional tracts and family directors would, he thought, prove infinitely more saleable. The Rev. Thomas Stackhouse suggested a 'New History of the Bible,' on the ground that there was 'nothing of that kind considerable in the English language.' Accordingly, proposals were drawn up: Wilford and Edlin disagreeing, the former withdrew, and poor Stackhouse was left, much against his will, in the hands of Edlin, who turned out a veritable Tartar, and whose patronage he was at length glad to exchange for the more remunerative one of Messrs. Batley and Cox, honourable men and true.

Numbers of these serials issued from the press bearing fictitious names. Many persons there were at this time, possessed of academical degrees, who were quite willing, if occasion required, to lend their names and degrees for the adornment of a title-page, for a consideration. One of the most notorious number writers at this time was, according to Nichols

[1] Nichols's *Lit. Anecdotes*, ii. 394.

Robert Sanders (a native of Scotland), who was employed by the first Lord Lyttelton to correct the proof sheets of the third edition of his 'History of England.' Dr. Sanders's testimony to the art and mystery of Bible commentary making, as practised in the eighteenth century, is instructive:—

> In the year 1773 (he confesses), I was employed by Mr. —— to write a Commentary on the Bible; but as I was not a clergyman, consequently my name could not be prefixed to it. Application was made to several clergymen for the use of their names, and at last Henry Southwell, LL.D., granted his. The success that attended the work was great indeed, and superior to any that had ever gone before.[1]

Dr. Henry Southwell was a graduate of Magdalen College, Cambridge, and rector of Asterby, Lincolnshire, where he died in 1779—being a divine whom 'no one that knew him ever suspected of writing a book.' For the loan of his name he received 'a considerable gratuity (a hundred guineas),' while the real author was rewarded with 'twenty-five or twenty-six shillings a sheet.' Sanders, in the narrative which he published of his life, says that the success which attended the publication of his first commentary induced him to set about the preparation of another 'on a more enlarged plan than any that had ever yet been printed.' Having engaged with two booksellers at the rate of two guineas per number, the difficulty was to secure the name of some divine as its author. Application was twice made to Dr. Colin Milne of Deptford, who twice refused; to Dr. Cruyse, who asked too much; and to one Sellon of Clerkenwell. 'At last,' says Sanders, 'I procured the name of Mr. Herries, and they (meaning the booksellers) paid him twenty pounds.'[2]

But how, it may be asked, was the demand for new books maintained at all in the last century? The answer is that it was maintained by means of the circulating libraries and reading clubs or societies, which were much more numerous than might be supposed:

> Thank you for your offer of Swift's [works] (writes the Rev. William Digby of Coleshill, under date of July 24, 1766). They are

[1] *Lit. Anecdotes*, ii. 395, 730; iii. 760.

[2] *Ibid.* iii. 760.

arrived at this place, for you must know we are civilised enough in this country to have instituted a club called a 'book club,' where I never saw pipe nor tobacco, and take in all the new things we choose. This respectable corps consists of twenty neighbouring clergy and squires, chosen by ballot, our regulations excluding after the manner of White's.[1]

Children of a larger growth, who belonged to what, for the sake of distinction, may be called the upper and middle classes, read accounts of notorious highwaymen, housebreakers, and thieves, and, it must be added, numbers of publications which could not now be sold with impunity. When such things were common nothing was thought of them, and the moral tone and general conduct of people of all ranks being also exceedingly lax when compared with those observable in people of similar classes now will explain how it was that such gross books were written and addressed to the middle classes of society, and why it was not then considered disgraceful for even the most eminent booksellers of the time to give publication to them. There were then but few books for the lower orders, seeing that hardly any among the lower orders were able to read, and the few among them who could had no desire to exercise that faculty, beyond, perhaps, a ballad, a maudlin religious tract, or a ridiculous legend, like 'Hop o' my Thumb,' and 'Little Red Riding Hood.' The consequence was that the body of the neglected sons of the poor gambled and drank during their leisure in taverns and alehouses, which were the constant fountains that furnished the courts of justice with offenders, and the gallows with victims. Whoever examines the magazines, which were intended for the sober sort of people, will have no difficulty in concluding from them what the occasional publications must have been among tradesmen and small housekeepers, their journeymen, servants, and dependents, that is, among those of them who could read, which was probably one then for twenty now. Hundreds of families then guarded their households so jealously from intellectual raids as to have no book at all among them, while no such family is now without some books. Few tradesmen then had more than a Bible and Prayer Book, the

[1] Jesse's *Selwyn*, ii. 32.

'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'Quarles's Emblems,' 'Robinson Crusoe,' the 'History of Pamela,' and the 'Sufferings of John Cockburn.' Young children and opulent youths were discouraged from reading and scolded if they wasted their time over books. It was a maxim that it was no use learning what would never be of use; and nothing, it was concluded, could be of use by which money could not at once be made.

James Lackington, the eccentric Chiswell Street bookseller, in that curious though amusing farrago of nonsense and instruction which he designates his 'Memoirs,' says that 'he had heard that when circulating libraries were first opened, the booksellers were much alarmed; and their rapid increase added to their fears, and led them to think that the sale of books would be much diminished by such libraries. But experience has proved that the sale of books, so far from being diminished by them, has been greatly promoted, as from those repositories many thousand families have been chiefly supplied with books, by which the taste for reading has become much more general, and thousands of books are purchased every year by such as have first borrowed them at these libraries, and after reading, approving of them, become purchasers.' And Lackington was no doubt perfectly correct in what he says, for by means of these reading societies and circulating libraries, many people who had a taste for reading were enabled to have opportunities of perusing the newest works at a trifling cost; thus creating an infinitely greater market than it would have been possible for the wishes of solitary buyers for ephemeral literature to have done; consequently a very large number of books began to be produced for this market alone. That formidable body, at which Samuel Taylor Coleridge once affected to laugh, known as the 'reading public,' was now in process of formation. 'Poets and philosophers, rendered diffident by their very number, addressed themselves to "learned readers;" then aimed to conciliate the graces of "the candid reader;" till, the critic still rising as the author sank, the amateurs of literature were erected into a municipality of judges, and addressed "the town."'[1] A.

Lackington fondly imagined that he had been highly

[1] *Biographia Literaria*, i. 60.

instrumental in diffusing the general desire for reading which he describes at the date he composed his 'Memoirs' as 'so prevalent among the inferior orders of society,'[1] and perhaps he was. The multiplication of serials owed its origin to that remarkable species of literature which sprang into importance during the first half of the eighteenth century, periodical literature, for the creation of which the eighteenth century must in great part be thanked. The way in this was led by an enterprising Clerkenwell printer named Edward Cave, who, seeing that the middle classes were supplied with little or nothing in the way of miscellaneous information, projected in 1731 the famous miscellany known as the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' that was 'to contain the essays and intelligence which appeared in the two hundred half-sheets which the London press then threw off monthly.' Cave offered a share in his venture to several of the London booksellers; but they, unwise in their own generation, scouted it as rash. The first number appeared in January 1731, and its circulation was wide, as it deserved to be, seeing that Cave, as Johnson said, scarcely ever looked out of the window of his printing office at St. John's Gate but with a view to its improvement. In a short time the booksellers started a rival, the 'London Magazine,' which ran from 1732 to 1781. Numerous others followed—the 'Universal,' the 'Town and Country,' 'European,' 'Scots.' In 1749 the first literary review was instituted, 'The Monthly Review,' and was followed a few years later by 'The Critical Review.' It would be difficult to estimate all the good which these did: for one thing, they wrested by degrees the patronage of literary men from the hands of the 'great,' and placed it in the hands of the middle classes.[2]

It would seem as if some of these magazines were often the work of one person's hands:—

During a part of the year 1771 (wrote the Rev. Percival Stockdale in his 'Memoirs') I compiled the 'Universal Magazine' for Mr. Hinton, a bookseller in Paternoster Row. For this business I had seven guineas a month; which at that time was a sum of great importance to my circumstances. But my paymaster was so sordid and suspicious a creature; it was so difficult to please him; he

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 65.
[2] Knight, *The Old Printer and the Modern Press.*

was such a pretender to judgment in matters of which he was totally ignorant; and he was so doubtful that he had not labour enough for his money, that in a few months I was obliged to quit my attention to him and his magazine.[1]

Sir John Hawkins, in his 'Life of Johnson,' published in 1787, ascribed the decline of literature to the ascendency of frivolous magazines between the years 1740 and 1760, and was of opinion that they rendered smatterers conceited, and conferred the superficial glitter of knowledge instead of its substance. Sir Richard Phillips, a contemporary of Hawkins, states that for many years previously to 1790, there were sold of the trifle called the 'Town and Country Magazine' fully 15,000 copies per month; and of another, the 'Ladies' Magazine,' 16,000 copies, and that such circumstances were therefore calculated to draw forth the observations of Hawkins.

Early in the eighteenth century the translation of the French adaptations of the Oriental legends, by Petis de la Croix, which were produced by Ambrose Phillips and others, rendered some of the Eastern tales familiar to the English essayists. They were quickly followed by a crowd of imitators, who soon wearied the public of the subject. About the time that Goldsmith flourished, the editors of magazines crammed their pages with Eastern or Chinese tales, founded on the model of Dr. Johnson's 'Rasselas,' and one of his smartest essays in the 'Public Ledger' was devoted to a satire of them. The Chinese philosopher visits a lady who had collected all her knowledge of Eastern manners from the magazine tales and legends, and is received politely by her, though she wondered at his neglecting to bring opium and a tobacco-box. Chairs were provided for the other visitors; he was accommodated, despite his protestations, with a cushion on the floor. The company, discovering that the Chinese philosopher could adapt himself to English manners, were greatly disappointed :—

'This gentleman's conversation' (said one of the ladies, who was a great reader) 'is like our own, mere chit-chat and common sense; there is nothing like sense in the true eastern style, where nothing more is required but sublimity. Oh! for a history of Aboulfaruris, the

[1] ii. p. 74.

grand voyager of genii, magicians, rocks, bags of bullets, giants, and enchanters, where all is great, obscure, magnificent, and unintelligible!' 'I have written many a sheet of eastern tale myself,' interrupted an author, 'and I defy the severest critic to say but that I have stuck close to the true manner. I have compared a lady's chin to the snow upon the mountains of Bomek, a soldier's sword to the clouds that obscure the face of heaven. If riches are mentioned I compared them to the flocks that graze the verdant Tefflis; if poverty, to the mists that veil the brow of Mount Baku. I have used *thee* and *thou* upon all occasions; I have described fallen stars and splitting mountains, not forgetting the little houris who make a pretty figure in every description.'[1]

The same writer cleverly ridiculed the prevalent fashion of publishing the records of tours, no matter how short, after touring became the fashion, in his remarks 'collected in a late journey to Kentish Town':—

Having heard much of Kentish Town, I conceived a strong desire to see that celebrated place. . . . Travellers have two methods of going to Kentish Town; they take coach, which costs ninepence, or they may go afoot, which costs nothing; in my opinion a coach is by far the most eligible convenience; but I was resolved to go on foot, having considered with myself that going in that manner would be the cheapest way. . . . From Pangrace to Kentish Town is an easy journey of one mile and a quarter; the road lies through a fine champaign country, well-watered with beautiful drains, and enamelled with flowers of all kinds. . . . As you enter Kentish Town, the eye is at once presented with the shops of artificers, such as vendors of candles, small coal and hair brooms, &c.[2]

The staple of the contents of the circulating libraries, both in town and country, especially the health resorts, were novels such as scarcely deserved the name. 'A greater mass of trash and rubbish,' wrote one of the acutest literary critics of modern times early in the present century, 'never disgraced the press of any country than the ordinary novels that filled and supported circulating libraries down nearly to the time of Miss Edgeworth's first appearance. These had been the "Vicar of Wakefield," to be sure, before; and Miss Burney's "Evelina" and "Cecilia," and MacKenzie's "Man of Feeling," and some bolder and more varied fictions of the Misses Lee. But the staple of our novel market was beyond imagination despicable, and had consequently sunk and degraded the whole department of literature

[1] *Citizen of the World*, No. xxxiii. [2] *Ibid.* No. cxxiii.

of which it had usurped the name.'[1] These trashy productions, which emanated from the Minerva Press, were in most cases the composition of women, and their plots turned chiefly upon amorous intrigue. Rotten is the one adjective which, with some few exceptions, best describes them one and all. There was no lack of these novels, but they were of a very inferior and even of a depraved character. Instead of natural incidents, natural characters, and natural dialogue, they displayed plots of the most utterly absurd and ridiculous character, and were stuffed so full of maudlin sentimentality that it is really difficult to divine how they were ever found worthy of perusal even by those who were most defective in moral sense and taste. The perusal of these detestable novels was in a great measure the sole recreation of young people of either sex whose education had been utterly neglected, or of persons whose morbid cravings after excitement could be satisfied by no other means. Novel-reading was one of the chief employments of the fair sex, and became with them oftentimes a passion as strong and uncontrollable as that of gin-drinking. It was with the avowed object of ridiculing the effects which the garbage supplied by the popular circulating libraries produced upon the minds of half-educated girls in the humbler walks of life, that George Colman the Elder composed his drama of 'Polly Honeycomb,' first performed at Drury Lane Theatre in December 1760. Prefixed to this play may be seen a list containing the titles of one hundred and eighty-two novels, which it is reasonable to suppose were actually in existence at the time it was written. Such titles as 'The History of Miss Kitty N——, containing her Amours and Adventures in Scotland, Ireland, Jamaica, and England,' or the 'History of the Intrigues and Gallantries of Christina, Queen of Sweden,' sufficiently indicate the scope and extent of the contents :—

Zounds! (Honeycomb is made to exclaim when alone) I shall run mad with vexation! You see now, gentlemen [coming forward to the audience] what a situation I am in! Instead of happiness and jollity, my friends and family about me, a wedding and a dance, and everything as it should be, here am I, left by myself, deserted

[1] Jeffrey, *Essays*, ed. 1853, p. 656.

by my intended son-in-law, bullied by an attorney's clerk, affronted by my own servant, my daughter mad, my wife in the vapours, and all in confusion. This comes of cordials and novels! Zounds! your stomachics are the devil, and a man might as well turn his daughter loose in Covent Garden, as trust the cultivation of her mind to a circulating library.

Even the fictions of Miss Burney, afterwards Madame d'Arblay, fall very flat upon the ears of present-day novel-readers. But such was not the case when they first made their appearance :—

I need not tell you that I gobbled up 'Cecilia' as soon as I could get it from my library. I never knew such a piece of work made with a book in my life! It has drawn iron tears down cheeks that were never wet by pity before; it has made novel-readers of callous old maiden ladies who have not for years received pleasure from anything but scandal. I know two amiable sisters at Colchester, sensible and accomplished women, who were found blubbering at such a rate one morning! The tale had drawn them on till near the hour of an engagement to dinner, which they were actually obliged to put off, because there was not time to recover their red eyes and swelled noses.[1]

Such is an accomplished country parson's testimony to the effects which the perusal of Madame d'Arblay's 'Cecilia,' published in the year 1782; a novel which ninety-nine people out of a hundred would now find inexpressibly dull and tedious.

The bookstalls, which, in the metropolis at least, owing to modern improvements, are fast becoming things of the past, were, in the last century, much appreciated by lovers of books, who used to direct their course through the streets of London, by the longest line, so as to take in the greatest number of them on their rounds. There were still many persons whom Milton, in the previous century, had denominated 'stall readers.' To many a poor scholar and lover of learning they must have been as tables spread in the wilderness. When Benjamin Franklin paid his first visit to the capital, four years after the accession of the first George, he found that circulating libraries were unknown. In the absence of these the bookstalls were frequented by those who had a sincere desire to make themselves acquainted with the contents of books. Taking up a

[1] Rev. T. Twining to Dr. Burney, *Twining Corresp.*, pp. 110, 111.

volume they would read as far as they were able; fold down the leaf or otherwise indicate the page at which they had left off, and return again and again until they had finished its perusal. It was the increase in the number of stall readers that led to the establishment of circulating libraries.

Thomas Holcroft, speaking in his autobiography of the days of his youth, 1759 or thereabouts, says that

> Books were not then, great or small, on this subject or on that, to be found in almost every house. A book, except of prayers or of daily religious use, was scarcely to be seen but among the opulent, or in the possession of the studious; and by the opulent they were often disregarded with a degree of neglect which would now be almost disgraceful.

He further states that in the course of six or seven years not a single book fell in his way. The popular learning of the time was centred in the old English ballads, such as 'Death and the Lady,' and 'Margaret's Ghost,' which were to be found adorning the walls of cottages and little alehouses, and which constituted the delight of the vulgar.[1] This is confirmed by Lackington, a London bookseller, who in 1787 made a book-selling tour to the Scotch capital :—

> Although (he observes) I went by the way of York, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, &c., and returned through Glasgow, Carlisle, Leeds, Lancaster, Preston, Manchester, and other considerable places, I was much surprised as well as disappointed at meeting with very few of the works of the most esteemed authors, and these few consisted in general of ordinary editions, besides an assemblage of common trifling books bound in sheep, and that, too, in a very bad manner. It is true at York and Leeds there were a few (and but very few) good books; but in all the other towns between London and Edinburgh nothing but trash was to be found.

In these days of magazines, newspapers, and reviews, the pamphlet receives scant notice at the hands of the reading public. Its verdict is generally set aside. But in the eighteenth century it was a power in the land. It was the sole means by which those who were absolutely unknown by name to the general public were enabled to lash principalities and powers, to expose abuses which others were too timid to assail, to

[1] *Life*, i. 135.

accuse negligent administrations, and to discuss such social questions as had begun to agitate society. To say that the authors of these publications more often than not 'to party gave up what was meant for mankind' is no impeachment either of the ability with which they were executed or denial of the beneficial ends to which they were directed. It was by the sale of pamphlets that many booksellers chiefly subsisted: 'sold at the pamphlet shops of London and Westminster,' being an imprint often to be found on the title-pages of these 'leaves of an hour,' so late as the reign of George III.

Songs and ballads were another form of literary entertainment, from the perusal of which our eighteenth-century forefathers derived much gratification in their leisure moments. They were, however, not all of an immaculate character. They were chiefly concerned with becoming intoxicated, with the praises of notorious thieves and highwaymen. They were sung, not only at 'chair clubs,' 'cock and hen clubs,' and 'free and easys,' but, thanks to the existence of an inefficient police and the non-existence of Sunday schools, were bawled about the streets in all parts of the town by hundreds of professional ballad-singers, of whom copies were purchased in any number by the bystanders.[1]

We now pass to another phase of the literary world of the eighteenth century—the newspaper press, which presents the most eventful period in the whole range of its history. With the dawn of the eighteenth century the press began to make itself felt as a great political agent. The reign of Anne was a time at which party spirit ran exceptionally high, and the conductors of the various newspapers which then began to multiply in considerable numbers steadily set themselves to combine intelligence with political discussion. To the influence of four writers who flourished at this time—Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, Sir Richard Steele, and Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke—(men who differed widely from each other)—many characteristics not only of our subsequent literature, but also of the newspaper of to-day, may be distinctly traced. But

[1] *Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27825, *passim.*

this standard was not maintained under the first two princes of the House of Brunswick.

At the time that Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, Fielding, and Smollett flourished, the newspapers got into the hands of party hacks, and, becoming in consequence nothing more nor less than the tools of faction, they soon fell into disrepute. Even Pulteney describes the Ministerial journalists of his time as 'a herd of wretches whom neither information can enlighten nor influence elevate,' and Sir Robert Walpole—a man who read but little, and who treated all that the world thought and said about his administration with stoical indifference—is equally outspoken: 'I have never discovered any reason to exalt the authors who wrote against the administration to a higher degree of reputation than their opponents.'

During the reign of Anne the conductors of the eighteen weekly newspapers which were published abused their liberty to a shameful extent. The queen, complaining of it to the Government and recommending them to apply a remedy, caused them to promise to do what in them lay to restrain it. 'They are here intending,' wrote Swift in his 'Journal to Stella,' under date of January 31, 1711, 'to tax all little printed papers a halfpenny every half-sheet, which will utterly ruin Grub Street, and I am endeavouring to prevent it.' Whatever his exertions were, they were in vain; for in the year following, mainly through the instrumentality of Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, and others of his party, an act was passed (which was to come into force on August 1, and to extend over a period of thirty-two years) imposing a stamp duty of one halfpenny upon every printed half-sheet or less, one penny upon a whole sheet, and a duty of twelvepence upon every advertisement. The effect which this measure produced was terrific. Numbers of news sheets went to the wall, while many of those that survived were amalgamated into one publication. 'Do you know that all Grub Street is dead and gone last week?' inquired Swift of Stella, on August 7, 1712. But Grub Street was not thus exterminated. It weathered the Stamp Act, and some of the worst habits of the worst traders in it were strengthened instead of being weakened through the pretended

effort of Lord Bolingbroke and the Tory party to improve the press by throwing obstacles in its way.[1] But while this impost undoubtedly brought many evils in its train, it on the whole conferred a benefit upon the press. For one thing, it raised the price of newspapers from halfpennies and farthings; for another, purchasers began to keep a sharp look out for their money's worth; and this had the effect of encouraging those by whom they were conducted to expend a little more time and care in compiling them. Consequently, instead of presenting the appearance of sheets crowded with vague rumours and old wives' tales, they won the reputation of being 'organs of public opinion.' It must not be supposed, however, that newspaper editors were even then particularly vigilant in excluding from their columns matter of a questionable character. Far from it; Goldsmith was no doubt speaking quite within bounds when he favoured his imaginary correspondent in the Celestial Empire with the following crumbs of information on this point:—

> The universal passion for politics is here gratified by daily Gazettes, as with us at China. But as in ours the Emperor endeavours to instruct his people, in theirs the people endeavour to instruct the Administration. You must not, however, imagine that they who compile these papers have any actual knowledge of the politics or the government of a state; they only collect their materials from the oracle of some coffee-house, which oracle himself has gathered them the night before from a beau at a gaming table, who has pillaged his knowledge from a great man's porter, who has had his information from the great man's gentleman, who has invented the whole story for his amusement the ght pre - ceding.

Without doubt, much of the so-called 'news' that found its way into print was procured in this manner; but then it must be borne in mind that, notwithstanding, it was during this period of journalistic degradation that accurate information respecting public affairs began to shape itself into something corresponding to parliamentary reporting. Anything answering to this description was almost unknown until Edward Cave junior, who founded the 'Gentleman's Magazine' in 1731,

[1] Fox Bourne's *English Newspapers*, i. 82.

managed to get hold of the pith of the speeches delivered in Parliament for insertion in the pages of that famous miscellany. Sir John Hawkins, in his 'Life of Johnson,' relates how he contrived to do so :—

> Taking with him a friend or two, he found means to procure for them and himself admission into the gallery of the House of Commons, or to some concealed station in the other house, and then they privately took down notes of the several speeches, and the general tendency and substance of the arguments. Thus furnished, Cave and his associates would adjourn to a neighbouring tavern and compare and adjust their notes, by means whereof, and the help of their memories, they became enabled to fix at least the substance of what they had already heard and remarked. The reducing this crude matter into form was the work of a future day and an abler hand—Guthrie, the historian—whom Cave retained for the purpose.

This bold scheme progressed uninterruptedly under the very nose of Parliament for the space of two years, until 1738. On April 13 in that year the House

> Resolved that it was an high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privileges of this House, for any news-writer, in letters or other papers (as minutes or under any other denomination), or for any printer or any publisher of any printed newspaper of any denomination, to presume to insert in the said letters or papers, or to give therein any account of the debates or other proceedings of this House, or any committee thereof, as well during the recess as the sitting of Parliament ; and that this House will proceed with the utmost severity against any and all such offenders.[1]

But Cave was no ordinary man. Undeterred he set his wits to work, and the result was, that in the number of the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for the month of June following, he printed a digest of the speeches under the heading of 'Debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia,' which took about nine pages. The names of the speakers were either transposed or twisted about almost beyond recognition. The word *Blefuscu* did duty for France ; *Nardacs* stood for dukes, *Hurgoes* for lords, and *Clinabs* for Commons. For some time Cave employed William Guthrie, one of Cave's hack writers, to edit the parliamentary reports for him. By degrees, however, they

[1] *Parl. Hist.* x. 800 11.

became more important, and Guthrie, becoming more unequal to the task of dealing with them, was deposed and succeeded by Samuel Johnson, who at once adopted a style of reporting which had the merit of novelty, to say the least, to recommend it. According to Nichols the sage confessed that he used to do no more than 'fix upon a speaker's name, make an argument for him, and conjure up an answer;' a plan at once so simple, and withal so ingenious, that the only wonder is that nobody had ever dreamed of adopting it before.

Of the authenticity, Johnson reports, of the parliamentary debates no doubts ever seem to have been entertained by those who read them. Sir John Hawkins relates that one day while dining with Foote and other friends, the chat turned on one of Pitt's speeches :—

> Many of the company remembered the debate, and many passages were cited from the speech, with the approbation and applause of all present. During the ardour of the conversation Johnson remained silent. When the warmth of praise subsided he opened his mouth with these words: 'That speech *I* wrote in a garret in Exeter Street.' The company was struck with astonishment.

And well they might be.

Johnson confessed to having written frequently three columns of parliamentary proceedings in the space of an hour, and to having taken good 'care the Whig dogs should never have the best of the argument.' It is but right to add that towards the close of his life Dr. Johnson expressed great contrition for these little shortcomings. When Johnson relinquished, after three years' service, in February 1740, the post of reporter on the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' Dr. John Hawkesworth, the most successful copyist of his style, entered upon the duties; and two months later, Cave and Thomas Astley, conductor of the 'London Magazine' (the most formidable rival of the 'Gentleman's') were arrested, 'complaint having been made against them for printing in their respective magazines an account of the trial of Simon, Lord Lovat.' A harassing trial followed, the pair received a severe reprimand from the bench, and eventually they regained their freedom 'on paying the fees, begging pardon of the House, and promising never to

offend in like manner again.' But these promises were soon broken, seeing that in 1752 Cave resumed the publication of the debates, prefacing them with this significant remark :—

The following heads of speeches in the H—— of C—— were given me by a gentleman who is of opinion that members of parliament are accountable to their constituents for what they say as well as what they do in their legislative capacity ; that no honest man who is entrusted with the liberties and purses of the people will ever be unwilling to have his whole conduct laid before those who so entrusted him, without disguise ; that if every gentleman acted on this just, this honourable, this constitutional principle, the electors themselves only would be to blame if they re-elected a person guilty of a breach of so important a trust.

Some of the advertisements which were inserted in the newspapers during the eighteenth century are very curious and amusing, besides being often instrumental in throwing no inconsiderable light upon the humbler phenomena of society. Here are some specimens :—

Wanted, two or three hundred pounds at five per cent., on security there can be no objection to. A single person may board for the interest, and be secure as to the principal at their own command, or may partake of the profits this money is designed to be laid out in, and added to the same capital on certain improvable advantages and profit, which will best suit anyone who has a genteel knowledge of the world. A line for A. G. at the London Bridge Punch House, adjoining to the Gate, shall be duly answered.[1]

Wanted to Purchase, a Place or Public Office in any part of England, from fifty to three hundred pounds per annum, if in the law the more agreeable. Any person having interest to procure the same shall have a suitable acknowledgment ; or any person that will give information of any vacancy or probability of a vacancy soon, in any place or office, shall upon purchase, or obtaining the place or office so vacant, or likely to become so, be genteelly satisfied for their trouble. Letters (containing particulars) directed to S. P., to be left at the bar of the Lombard Street Coffee House in Lombard Street, shall be answered.[1]

Again—

A lad from 14 years to 18, that is used to go clean, of a good character, may hear of a beneficial place, by inquiring at the Globe in Hatton Garden, this day or to-morrow.

[1] *Public Adv.* May 27, 1755.

This is a curiosity in its way :—

Wanted under the Government (law and army excepted), a patent place, or one that may be supplied by a deputy. The gentleman has no objection to attendance himself, provided he is not confined to particular hours, and too close application to business. Any person who can procure such shall have an adequate gratuity in hand paid, from 1,000*l.* to 5,000*l.* Whosoever this may suit, please to signify the nature of the place to John Boaman, at his office on Clerkenwell Green, any day this week from 9 to 3 ; and if approved of, they shall be waited on forthwith with the principal. Nice honour and strict secresy may be depended on.

Under the heading of 'Wants a Place' we have the following :—

A Lady's Woman, a very creditable person, of about 33, and has had the smallpox ; lived nearly fourteen years in a family ; parted from no difference, and can have the best of characters. Can speak the French tongue, and mistress of the needle. She would choose to be with an elderly lady, or where the family is small and retired.

A little later we meet with this :—

Lodgings for a single gentleman are wanted which are neat and light, consisting of two rooms. Any well-bred person of an obliging disposition, who has such to let between Covent Garden and the Fleet Market, is desired to send a line of intelligence to Mr. George Hazzard, at St. George's Coffee House, Chancery Lane, in order to be waited on. The gentleman would be glad of a place for some liquor, nor does he choose to exceed eighteen or twenty pounds a year.

Among the advertisements in the 'Public Advertiser' for January 1, 1761, appears the following :—

Whereas sundry copies of verses have been sent to some ladies at Wanstead in Essex, for which they think themselves highly favoured by the author. As they are totally unacquainted with his person, though not with his merits, they make the request to him that he will, on Friday evening next, make his personal appearance at Wanstead aforesaid, and he shall receive from them such ample rewards as shall suit with a man of honour.

In another place may be found this announcement :—

Whereas a certain young clergyman received on Saturday last a poetic epistle from a supposed lady, beginning with these words—

> No one on earth with more pleasure attends
> To hear the account of a fault from their friends.

This is to desire the said lady to explain herself more explicitly, as the said clergyman does not really understand her meaning. The said epistle had no name, no initial letters, nor any place of abode.

An advertisement announcing the running away of a boy from home concludes thus :—

If he is in disguise he may be known by his north country accent, and has *the scurvy in his hands to a great height.*

Whereas a tall young gentleman above the common size, dressed in a yellow grounded velvet (supposed to be a foreigner), with a solitaire round his neck and a glass in his hand, was narrowly observed and much approved of by a certain young lady at the last ridotto. This is to acquaint the said young gentleman, if his heart is entirely disengaged, that if he will apply to A. B., at Garraway's Coffee House, in Exchange Alley, he may be directed to have an interview with the said young lady, which may prove greatly to his advantage. Strict secresy on the gentleman's side will be depended upon.

Lastly :—

A lady who had on a pink-coloured capuchin, edged with ermine, a black patch near her right eye, sat in a front seat in the next side box but one to the stage on Wednesday night, at Drury Lane Playhouse; if that lady is single, and willing to treat on terms of honour and generosity of a married state, it would be deemed a favour to receive a line directed to C. D., at Clifford's Inn Old Coffee House, how she may be addressed being a serious affair.

We have seen that in the tenth year of the reign of Anne (1712), a stamp duty of one halfpenny was imposed upon newspapers. Her successor imposed an additional tax of the same amount on them, and one extra upon each advertisement. Nothing of importance occurred till the reign of George III., which was very memorable for its newspaper acts. The first directed that no stamps were to be delivered out for either newspapers or pamphlets until security had been given for the duties on the advertisements which were to be printed in them. An additional duty of a halfpenny on each newspaper, and sixpence on each advertisement, was imposed in 1776, which was raised to eightpence twelve years afterwards. In 1794 an Act of Parliament was passed empowering the commissioners to stamp the paper used for news purposes in sheets of single demy instead of sheets of double demy, and three years later Parliament again legislated for the press, but

to do nothing more than impose a fresh tax of an additional halfpenny. Following on these enactments came an increase in the size of newspapers. Compared with those of half a century previously the newspapers of 1789 were of huge dimensions, although much room was left for improvement in that direction. The numbers of newspapers increased too. In the year 1785 the poet Crabbe published his poem of the 'Newspaper,' in which he descants upon their variety :—

> Soon as morning dawns with roseate hue,
> The 'Herald' of the morn arises too,
> 'Post' after 'Post' succeeds, and all day long
> 'Gazettes' and 'Ledgers' swarm, a motley throng.
> When evening comes she comes with all her train,
> Of 'Ledgers,' 'Chronicles,' and 'Posts' again,
> Like bats appearing, when the sun goes down,
> From holes obscure and corners of the town.

In another part of this poem Crabbe indicates how well the editors succeeded in catering for all classes of readers, and with what avidity the fare which they purveyed was devoured by those who purchased them :—

> Eager every eye surveys the part,
> That brings its favourite subject to the heart :
> Grave politicians look for facts alone,
> And gravely add conjectures of their own ;
> The sprightly nymph who never broke her rest
> For tottering crowns or mighty lands oppressed,
> Finds broils and battles, but neglects them all,
> For songs and suits, a birthday or a ball.
> The keen warm man o'erlooks each idle tale,
> For 'Moneys Wanted' and 'Estates on Sale,'
> While some with equal minds to all attend,
> Pleased with each part, and grieved to find an end.

To the close of the century the shape of newspapers was totally different from that to which we are accustomed :—

A four-paged sheet, containing less than is at present given in two pages of the 'Times,' was as much as the law allowed to be issued with a single stamp, and as much as the most enterprising editor could contrive to fill with interesting matter, even though half the space might be taken up with advertisements.[1]

[1] Fox Bourne's *English Newspapers*, i. 248.

Editors long clung tenaciously to many of the old-fashioned devices. So late as 1784 the names of the speakers in Parliament may be found expressed by initials, or the first and last letters separated either by asterisks or hyphens, and even the list of persons declared bankrupts must be headed 'B—NKR—PTS.' The quality of the paper used was mostly very inferior, and the type both heavy and uneven, but so far as size is concerned, they had, in the appropriate language of De Quincey, 'expanded from the size of a dinner napkin to that of a breakfast table-cloth.' A competent authority ascertained that in 1753, the reign of George II., the aggregate newspaper circulation in England was 7,411,757, and that at the close of the seven years then ensuing, it was found to be 9,404,790. In 1792 the number of copies of newspapers annually published in the whole of England was 15,005,760, more than double in the space of little less than forty years. But with all this, by far the greater proportion of the middle classes throughout the country were wholly ignorant of passing public events, while the working classes seldom inquired much about anything beyond their own immediate callings.

Let us now turn aside to glance for a while at the provincial newspapers of the eighteenth century, and let us remember, as we do so, that it was during the early portion of this period that they sprang into existence. It is probable that the 'Norwich Postman,' a small quarto which made its appearance in 1706, was the first provincial newspaper produced in that age. The 'Postman' remained in sole possession of the field until eight years later, when the first number of the 'Norwich Courant' or 'Weekly Packet' was printed. 'The Salisbury Postman' was inaugurated shortly after the accession of George I., and the 'York Mercury' was established about the same time. The city of Exeter boasted three news-sheets in 1719, but the proprietors of all of them got into hot water for daring to report parliamentary proceedings. The 'Leeds Mercury' was launched in May 1720, and the 'Gloucester Journal' by Raikes in 1722. Manchester lacked a newspaper of its own until 1730, when the 'Gazette' was established. The first number of the 'Derby Mercury' appeared in 1732; the

'Oxford Journal,' 1740; the 'Nottingham Journal,' in January 1741; 'Aris's Birmingham Gazette,' in November of the same year. 'Felix Farley's Bristol Journal' appeared in January 1744. In 1745 the Young Pretender's movements called the 'Preston Journal' into existence, and others followed in rapid succession. In 1782 there were no fewer than fifty newspapers published in the provinces of England; and by 1795 that number had been augmented by twenty-two.[1]

The primary reason of the increase of provincial newspapers is doubtless to be sought in the fact that there was a great desire among the wealthier country residents to receive news from the capital. Long after the famous news-sheets of Queen Anne's reign had been established, country gentlemen derived their notions of men and manners in London from a news correspondent, who, for a subscription of a few pounds a year, wrote a letter of news every post day to his subscribers in the provinces. That the news so communicated was generally false and misleading is evident from the advertisement announcing the first number of the 'Evening Post,' September 6, 1709, which says:—'There must be three or four pounds per annum paid by those gentlemen who are out of town for written news, which is so far generally from any probability of matter of fact in it, that it is frequently stuffed up with a "We hear," &c.; or "An eminent Jew merchant has received a letter," &c.; being nothing more than downright fiction.'

Doubtless, if sounded as to their contents in the last century, the reply of provincial newspapers would be (that is, assuming they had a voice) on a par with that with which the immortal knife-grinder of the Anti-Jacobin favoured the friend of humanity—'Story! God bless you, I have none to tell, sir!' The difficulty which provincial editors experienced in filling the columns of these newspapers, such as they were then, was enormous. Their stock-in-trade chiefly consisted of the London journals, a pair of scissors, and a pot of paste. The papers furnished them with materials for their leading

[1] Andrews, *History of British Journalism*, ii. 270-4.

articles, while the scraps and shreds of local news they picked up as best they could. The story goes that in 1752 the then editor of the 'Leicester Journal' (which was at that time printed in London because there existed no local press, and sent down to the town for publication), found himself so cast aground by the lack of news, that as a last resource he was forced to fill up his columns by reprinting weekly the Mosaic records *verbatim et literatim*, and actually got as far as the tenth chapter of the book of Exodus before changes in the tide of public affairs enabled him to be furnished with enough matter to insert in his columns.

Locomotion was of course very difficult; the post-boy would take the best part of three days to accomplish the distance between Leicester and London, going and returning; setting the 'copy' in type would occupy a couple of days at the least; printing as many more, so that by the time subscribers actually received their copies the news contained in them was little short of a week old.

The machinery which at the present time, by the aid of the iron road and the electric telegraph, seizes every event with the celerity of lightning, catches every trivial incident, and records every little occurrence even in villages the remotest from public view, slumbered in the womb of time. Such local intelligence as was contained in these sheets consisted of births, marriages, and deaths, and a few scanty paragraphs having reference to highway robberies or some phenomenon of horticulture. Scarcely one-third of the provincial newspapers had editors who were capable of writing what are called leading articles. They were chiefly printers, many of whom had no knowledge of any other editorial duties than that which concerned the paste and scissors department of the process of putting a newspaper together. Such original articles as were required were written by persons connected with the London press, by whom they were sent down to Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, and other large towns. Numbers of newspapers were even edited in the metropolis, at that time.[1]

[1] In proof of this see the *Autobiography of William Jerdan*, i. 110.

The following is a specimen of an eighteenth-century local newspaper ('Leeds Mercury') paragraph, and of the style and orthography in which they were ordinarily composed :—

Leeds, January 28, 1723.—We hear from Woolley, near Wakefield, of an apple-tree that bloomed in November last, has now some scores of apples thereon, some of which are said to be as big as walnuts ; and from Bately we are informed that young stock-doves were taken in that parish a fortnight ago. And from Tong in Christmas last, eggs were taken out of a magpie nest, and at Stone Hill Top, near Yeadon, the like were taken there.[1]

Sir Edward Baines, in the interesting monograph of his father, says that so late as the dawn of the nineteenth century, the files of the 'Leeds Mercury,' like almost every other provincial paper, exhibit no editorial comments ; and that all the political paragraphs were extracted from the London newspapers which were brought down by the coach.[2]

Until the adoption of the mail-coach system, the proprietors of all the newspapers in the city of York were obliged to despatch messengers as far south as Grantham, in order to procure the London news.[3] But all these difficulties provincial editors by dint of patience and perseverance contrived to surmount ; as by degrees the press increased in favour with the community, and, before the eighteenth century passed away, many a provincial newspaper could have borne a not unfavourable comparison with some which were then printed and published in the capital itself. Editors now addressed themselves seriously to the task of catering for a people who deserved all the praise which Milton had bestowed in his eloquent panegyric upon their forefathers—'a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to.'

Before dismissing the press from notice, it should be mentioned that the first to whom the idea of enlisting newspapers in the service of the Government suggested itself was

[1] Baines, *Life of F. Baines*, p. 38. [2] *Ibid.* p. 41.
[3] Hargrove, *Hist. of York*, ii. 261.

William Pitt. At the time when he was seeking to propagate his views upon the question of inoculation, he delegated an official of the Government to place himself in communication with the conductors of the leading provincial journals, and to offer a gratuitous supply of the London newspapers containing certain articles scored in red ink, on the understanding that they were to insert as many of them as the space of their journals would conveniently admit.[1]

Anonymity, and the adoption of some *nom-de-guerre*, were very favourite devices of the members of both the literary and the journalistic professions in the last century. One reason of this was that, the powers that were possessed a knack of putting the law of libel into force rather sharply if they happened to be particularly desirous of catching hold of any obnoxious party-writers. The 'Tatler,' it will be remembered, was edited by 'Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff;' the 'Guardian' was conducted by 'Mr. Nestor Ironsides;' the 'Female Tatler' was edited by 'Mrs. Crackenthorpe;' the 'Medley,' by 'Jeremy Quick;' the 'Observator,' by 'Humphrey Medlicott;' the 'Universal Spectator,' by 'Henry Stonecastle;' the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' by 'Sylvanus Urban, Gent.' (a figment which to this very day is maintained); Bolingbroke wrote in the 'Craftsman' under the signature of 'Humphrey Oldcastle;' Dean Swift took refuge in 'M. B. Drapier in Dublin' when penning his famous 'Drapier's Letters;' Fielding conducted the 'Covent Garden Journal' under the name of 'Sir Alexander Drawcanzir;' Horace Walpole adopted the *nom-de-guerre* of 'William Marshall' when he published his novel called the 'Castle of Otranto;' the mysterious author (who, it is now generally supposed, was Sir Philip Francis, sometime chief clerk of the War Office) of that remarkable series of political letters published at intervals in the columns of the 'Public Advertiser' between 1769 and 1772—a series of letters which contributed to elevate journalism to a far more important position than it had hitherto ever held—shielded himself

[1] Knight-Hunt, *The Fourth Estate*, i. 279.

effectually under the ægis of 'Junius;' 'Simon Gentletouch, of Pall Mall, Esquire,' edited the 'Westminster Journal;' Nathaniel Amherst conducted the 'Craftsman' as 'Caleb D'Anvers;' and Dr. John Wolcot's coarse though lively satires were published under the appellation of 'Peter Pindar.'

# CHAPTER XV.

## THE POLITICAL WORLD.

Bitterness of party spirit—Intensity of political feeling and its causes—Political societies—Elections and electioneering tactics—Hogarth's Election series—The case of New Shoreham—William Wilberforce and the Hull freemen—The Westminster election of 1784—Bribery and corruption in high places—Cowper and the visit of the candidate—Fierceness of the electoral contests for Leicester, Middlesex, and Nottingham in last century.

HINTS which have more than once been dropped in these pages will have fully prepared the reader for the assertion that the antipathy which existed between the two great political parties in the state during the period under review was bitter in the extreme. The eighteenth century was essentially an age of party, and almost everything took its shape and hue. By its means the columns of the newspapers were continually flooded with libels, and with outpourings of the most virulent acerbity and personal abuse ; by its means, also, the streets were filled with riots and tumults. At one time party spirit extended itself to everyday attire, a yellow waistcoat and breeches denoting a staunch Whig ;[1] a scarlet waistcoat, ornamented with gold buttons, and a pair of black silk breeches, a supporter of Pitt, among men ; a fox's tail placed by way of decoration in the head-dress, and a large muff made of the skin of the common red fox, proclaimed the fair wearer an adherent of Charles James Fox.[2] Heads of families neglected their wives and their children, tradesmen forsook their counters, and divines their pulpits, that they might bear their part in the interminable

[1] *Autob. of Lord Dundonald*, p. 46.

[2] Mackenzie, *Lounger*, No. 10 ; *Bland Burges Papers*, ed. Hutton, pp. 122-6.

political discussions of the coffee-houses and clubs. Men, metaphorically speaking, lived upon politics. Who that has ever read it will easily forget Addison's humorous sketch, contained in the 'Tatler,' No. 155, of the 'Political Upholsterer' (the prototype of whom, it is said, was the father of the eminent musician, Dr. Arne), an individual who rose before day to read the 'Postman,' and 'who would take two or three turns to the other end of the town before his neighbours were up to see if there were any Dutch mails come in,' and who was 'much more inquisitive to know what passed in Poland than in his own family'? Or who will easily forget, that has once read it, that excellent paper contained in No. 403 of the 'Spectator,' in which he describes his progress through the coffee-houses in the several districts and parishes of London and Westminster, in order to make himself acquainted with the opinions which their respective 'particular statesmen' entertained on the current report of the French king's death? Beginning 'as near the fountain head as possible,' he called first at St. James's, 'and there heard the whole Spanish monarchy disposed of, and all the line of Bourbon provided for in less than a quarter of an hour.' Next he strolled to St. Giles's, where he beheld 'a board of French gentlemen sitting upon the life and death of their Grand Monarque. Those among them who had espoused the Whig interest very positively affirmed 'that he departed this life about a week since, and therefore proceeded, without any further delay, to the release of their friends on the galleys, and to their own re-establishment.' Finding that upon this question considerable diversity of opinion reigned, Mr. Spectator went on his way. He noticed that there was little variation in the politics of the coffee-houses situated between Charing Cross and Covent Garden; but upon stepping into 'Wills',' he perceived that the theme of conversation of the politicians therein assembled had changed from the French king's death 'to that of Boileau, Racine, Corneille, and other poets, whom they regretted on this occasion as persons who would have obliged the world with very noble elegies on the death of so great a prince and so eminent a patron of learning.' Proceeding onwards to a coffee-house in St. Paul's churchyard, Mr. Spec-

tator 'listened with great attention to a learned man who gave the company an account of the deplorable state of France during the minority of the deceased king.' Turning on his right hand into Fish Street, he heard 'the chief politician of that quarter' observe, 'If the King of France is certainly dead, we shall have plenty of mackerel this season; our fishery will not be disturbed by privateers, as it has been for these ten years past.' While this politician was discussing in what manner the king's death would affect the pilchard fisheries, Mr. Spectator 'entered a by-coffee-house that stood at the upper end of a narrow lane.' Here he discovered a non-juror hotly debating with a laceman, who was the chief supporter of a meeting house in the vicinity, as to whether the late French king was most like Augustus Cæsar or Nero. Mr. Spectator did not stay to hear the conclusion of the whole matter, but thence made the best of his way to Cheapside, where he 'gazed upon the signs for some time before he found one to his purpose.' When he did so the first person he met 'expressed a great grief for the death of the French king.' But this sorrow arose from its touching his worldly possessions, he having sold out of the bank about three days before he heard the news. Just at this point 'a haberdasher who was the oracle of the coffee-house, and had his circle of admirers about him, called several to witness that he had declared his opinion above a week before that the French king was certainly dead; to which he added that, considering the late advices we had received from France, it was impossible that it could be otherwise.' He had scarcely given utterance to these words when a gentleman fresh from Garraway's entered, and informed the company that it appeared by the latest advices from France that the king was enjoying excellent health, and that he joined in the chase on the very morning that the post left for England. Whereupon we are told that the oracle 'stole off his hat that hung upon a wooden peg by him, and retired to his shop with great confusion.'

And as it was in the days of Queen Anne so was it in the days of King George III. The interest in politics continued to be unabated.

An Englishman (wrote Goldsmith in the 'Public Ledger'), not satisfied with finding by his own prosperity the contending powers of Europe properly balanced, desires also to know the precise value of every weight in either scale. To gratify this curiosity a leaf of political instruction is served up every morning with tea. When our politician has feasted upon this, he repairs to a coffee-house in order to ruminate upon what he has read, and increase his collection; from thence he proceeds to the ordinary, inquires what news, and treasuring up every requisition there, hunts about all the evening in quest of more, and carefully adds it to all the rest. Thus, at night he returns home full of the important advices of the day; when lo! waking next morning he finds the instructions of yesterday a collection of absurdity or palpable falsehood. This one would think a mortifying repulse in the pursuit of wisdom, yet our politician, no way discouraged, hunts on, in order to collect fresh materials and in order to be again disappointed.

This passage fully bears out Addison's humorous testimony of nearly half a century previously. When Curran first came to London in 1774 he noticed particularly how all classes of the community were engrossed with politics in the eating-houses :—

Here (wrote he to the Rev. Henry Weston, an early college friend), every coal-porter is a politician, and vents his maxims in public with all the importance of a man who thinks he is exerting himself for the public service; he claims the privilege of looking as wise as possible, and of talking as loud, of damning the ministry, and abusing the king, with less reserve than he would his own equal. Yet little as these poor people understand of the liberty they contend so warmly for, or of the measures they rail against, it reconciles me to their absurdity by considering that they are happy at so small an expense as being ridiculous; and they certainly receive more pleasure from the power of abusing than they would from the reformation of what they condemn.[1]

Nor were the ladies less obstreperous than their lords on political matters. The wearer of a hooped petticoat was frequently expounding the doctrine of passive obedience, and laying down the law upon the possible return of the Pretender :—

Women of this turn (wrote Addison) are so earnest in contending for hereditary right that they wholly neglect the education of their sons and heirs, and are so taken up with their zeal for the Church that they cannot find time to teach their children the Catechism. . . . Such is our misfortune that we sometimes see a

[1] Phillips, *Curran and his Contemporaries*, ed. 1850, p. 25.

pair of stays ready to burst with sedition, and hear the most masculine passions expressed in the sweetest voices.[1]

Elsewhere he says :—

As our English ladies are at present the greatest stateswomen in Europe, they will be in danger of making themselves the most unamiable part of their sex if they continue to give a loose to intemperate language and to a low kind of ribaldry which is not used among the women of fashion in any other country.[2]

This was in a great measure excusable. The intellectual attainments of the generality of women, even so late as the accession of George III., were such as were hardly deserving of the name, the consequence being that they spent 'their hours in an indolent state of body and mind, without either recreations or reflections.' Thus, when the political world was stirred, they were stirred too.

As to the feeling manifested by the adverse factions one towards another, there is little reason to doubt that it amounted to something like that which is recorded in Pope's humorous piece, entitled 'Memoirs of P. P. Clerk of this Parish;' a parish in which there lived one Robert Jenkins, farrier, 'a man of bright parts and shrewd conceit,' who 'never shoed a horse of a whig or a fanatic but he lamed him sorely.'[3]

It cannot be said that political excitement in the age we are considering was ever at a loss for something or somebody on which or on whom to satisfy its cravings. On the death of William III. in 1702, Anne ascended the throne, and throughout her reign was practically the tool of female favourites, themselves the tools of party intriguers. The first monarchs of the Brunswick dynasty were both grossly ignorant of the character of the English people. Both were alienated from national sympathies. Both regarded the nation as nothing more than an instrument for the advancement of their electoral dominions in Hanover. Both failed signally to instil feelings of loyalty and respect into the subjects whom they came to govern. The consequence was, that the control of British affairs was shifted almost entirely on to the shoulders of ministers. Before George I. had been on the throne a year

[1] *The Freeholder*, No. 26. [2] *Ibid.* No. 23.
[3] Pope's *Works*, ed. Elwin, x. 443.

the Jacobite rebellion broke out. Then came the passing of the Septennial Act in the year following; the failure of the infamous South Sea scheme in 1721, which placed Sir Robert Walpole at the head of the ministry; the rejection of his memorable Excise scheme in 1732; the disastrous war with Spain which commenced in 1739; the strenuous opposition which Walpole encountered, and which at last led to his dismissal from office; the expedition to Flanders in 1742; the feverish excitement attendant on the bold rising of the young Pretender and his rebel army in 1745, which culminated in the battle of Culloden Moor, and collapsed the Jacobite cause; the French war of 1759; the spirit of discontent evoked by the writings of John Wilkes, and the ill-judged proceedings instituted against him, which only added fuel to fire; the various expedients by which it was sought to augment the revenue; the taxation of colonies; the American proposal for the passing of the Stamp Act; the discontent of the colonies; the rejection of the Subscription Bill; the disastrous American War, which began in 1775, and continued with varying success until 1782, resulting in the humiliating loss of 'the grandest monument ever erected by a people of modern times, and second only to the Greek colonisation in the whole history of the world;' the publication of the letters of Junius in the 'Public Advertiser;' the extension of British dominion in Hindostan; the trial of Admiral Keppel in 1779; the Gordon riots of 1780; the numerous brilliant victories by land and sea; the opposition to the administration of the Earl of Shelburne; the defeat of the Coalition; the militia laws; the trial of Warren Hastings; the propositions for the abolition of the slave-trade; the outbreak of the French Revolution and the writings of Thomas Paine; the war with France, which began in 1793; the trials of Hardy and Tooke; and the mutiny at the Nore; all these important events succeeding one another in rapid succession, formed a never-ending theme for discussion, bickering, and strife. By these events the waves of the political world were stirred to their inmost depths, like the pool of Bethesda when the healing influence came down. At times men could neither think, dream, nor speak of anything else but politics.

Snugly ensconced within the shade of some coffee-house or tavern, the various political cliques mustered in full force night after night, and there argued the hours away over their tea, coffee, or chocolate, vigorously protesting against each measure of the Government, or uniting in applauding it with patriotic warmth. The subjects of debate were generally announced in the newspapers, together with a notice of the time and place of meeting. Thus in the 'Gazetteer' for October 24, 1778, readers are informed that

at the Society for Free Debate, Queen's Arms, Newgate Street, the questions to be argued are as follows, viz., 'Are not the severe laws by which the soldiery of England are governed dangerous to British liberty? and ought Great Britain to give up the dependency of America or declare war with France?'

Thus the 'Morning Chronicle' for November 4, 1779, announces :—

The Apollo Society for the discussion of all questions in history, literature, policy, and theology, at the King's Arms Tavern, Grafton Street, Soho.—To-morrow, the 3rd inst., will be debated the following question, 'Would not a union between Great Britain and Ireland be the best mode of redressing the grievances of that country, and securing this?' The chair to be taken precisely at eight o'clock. Admittance 6*d.* Lemonade and porter for those who choose to refresh themselves in an adjacent room. N.B. The room will be illuminated with wax lights.

Again, in another column of the same journal :—

Westminster Forum.—The question for next Monday evening's debate : 'Is a closer union with Ireland, somewhat similar to that with Scotland, to be wished; and as things are now situate, would it be for the mutual interest of Great Britain and Ireland?' The chair will be taken precisely at eight o'clock.

Judge Curwen records in his 'Journal' that on October 19, 1780, he

went with Mr. Sparhawk to Disputing Club at King's Arms, Cornhill. Question : 'Is it for the advantage of mankind that the institution of government rewards should have been given to virtue as well as punishments inflicted for vice?' . . . Some of the speakers acquitted themselves to very general approbation, and none failed to receive marks of applause. . . . The room was large and handsomely furnished with glass chandeliers, and the entertainm ent highly pleasing and instructive. The president enters at eight

o'clock and continues till ten. When the question has been debated, and no one, after a silence of two minutes, offers to rise, he puts the question, or rather, reads it very deliberately; the vote is then taken and declared; in the present question, in the negative.

Certain of these political societies achieved very great success in their way, particularly the Jacobite Club, formed in order to promote the restoration of the exiled Stuarts; the society called 'The Friends of the People,' founded in London in April 1792, by Sheridan, Erskine, and other distinguished legislators, in order to bring about some reform in the matter of popular representation; and the 'Constitutional' and 'Corresponding Societies,' associations the members of which consisted of lesser known people, but which were all established for the promotion of parliamentary reform. The irrepressible passion for discussion which succeeded the fall of old systems on the French Revolution led to the formation of several associations for the purpose of protecting liberty and property from the ruthless attacks of Republican partisans.[1] Even the London shopboys, the butchers, bakers, shoemakers, tailors, formed their clubs for the discussion of politics, and very cleverly did Fielding satirise them in two papers contributed to Numbers 8 and 9 respectively of the 'Covent Garden Journal.' The following is a transcript of a report of one of these meetings which he pretended had been sent him:—

Important questions cunsarning relidgin and gubermint handyled by the Robinhoodians, March 8, 1751. This evenin the questin at the Robinhood was, Whether relidgin was of anny youse to a sosyaty; baken (taken) bifor mee Tommas Whytebred, baker. James Skotchum, barber, spak as showeth: Sir, I ham of upinion, that relidgin can be of no youse to any mortal sole; because as why, relidgin is no youse to trayd, and if religion be of youse to trayd, how is it yousefool to sosyaty. Now nobody can deny but that a man maye kary on his trayd very wel without relidgin; nay, and better two, for then he maye wurk won day in a wik mor than at present; whereof no body can saye but that seven is more than six, &c., &c.[2]

[1] See Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*, i. 237; Cartwright's *Memoirs*, i. 192; and on the good which some of these societies did, see *Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27829, ff. 143–8.

[2] *Fielding's Works*, ed. Murphy, iv. 372; see also Boaden's *Life of Mrs. Jordan*, i. 282.

The members of this particular club met twice a week at the Robin Hood, in Butcher Row, where its president, who was a baker, seated in a kind of pulpit, portioned out the time by an hourglass to the speakers, who were principally masons, carpenters, smiths, and operatives. The club sat for three hours, and each member was allowed to address the others for five minutes, at the expiration of which the president silenced him with the sound of a hammer. Public affairs, and even religious topics, claimed equally the attention of this club, besides the subjects that occasioned the keenest debates in the legislative assembly.[1] Fielding's sarcasm was, doubtless, levelled at the Robin Hood, chiefly because he saw that its proceedings, like many others of the same stamp, bore a strong resemblance to that memorable assembly of which we are told, 'the more part knew not wherefore they were come together,' and which 'cried out for the space of two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"'

A few remarks upon the subject of English parliamentary elections and electioneering tactics which were adopted in the last century will not be irrelevant. Year by year the struggle between the two great parties became more and more severe, and the spirit of turbulence and acrimony which was infused into the contests concurrently disturbed the peace and concord of English provincial towns and villages. Families were often reduced to the verge of beggary by them. The votaries of duelling found abundant excuse in the intemperate harangues of rival candidates to parry with their antagonists. Abuses, it is almost needless to add, of every kind prevailed, and for this the absurd notion that all was fair in electioneering must be held largely responsible. The system was rotten at the core. As Southey said:—

> Men who at other times regarded it as their first duty to speak truth, and who thought their honour implicated in their word, scrupled not (at election times) at asserting the grossest and most impudent falsehoods, if by that means they thought they might obtain a momentary advantage over the rival party. In order that the fidelity of political supporters might be secured, every office in the State, from the prime minister down to the humblest fellow in

[1] Grosley, *Observations on England*, i. 150

the Post Office or the Customs, was conferred. The one thing needful was political support, and that it might be secured nothing was grudged. Without it nothing was to be obtained. Fair dealing was by common consent banished from the consideration of public men. Dr. Johnson's well-known definition of an exciseman is sufficiently indicative of the profound indignation which a universal system of bribery had excited among the few resolute and fair-minded men which its long sufferance had left in the country.

How much trimming went on may be gathered from the following entry in Swift's 'Journal to Stella,' under date of October 5, 1710 :—

> This morning Delaval came to see me, and we went to Kneller's, who was not in town. In the way we met the electors for Parliament men ; and the rabble came about our coach crying 'A Colt !' 'A Stanhope !' &c. We were afraid of a dead cat or our glasses broken, and so were always of their side.

It would also seem that electors were assumed to have a right to know every triviality which could by any possibility defame the character of a candidate for parliamentary honours, for every such triviality was eagerly sought, and when found, turned to the best advantage at election time. Boswell records, in his 'Life of Johnson,' that upon one occasion he asked the sage whether a certain foolish act would be detrimental to the chances of success of a common friend of theirs in life. 'It may, perhaps, sir, be mentioned at an election,' was all the reply which the doctor vouchsafed to give, evidently of opinion that it would have been better for him that a millstone be hanged round his neck than that a word defamatory should be breathed against him. The sage of Fleet Street may possibly have been thinking of the case of Lord Grimston, who when a youth wrote a comedy called 'Love in a Hollow Tree,' which was printed in 1705. When his lordship came to man's estate he saw good reason to be ashamed of his performance, and endeavoured, as far as he was able, to suppress it. This purpose he would have succeeded in effecting had not the Duchess of Marlborough, in order to serve an election whim, ordered a new edition to be printed, with a cut representing an elephant dancing on a rope, adorning the title-page. Lord Grimston, of course, lost no time in buying up the entire edition,

but her Grace being resolutely determined to effect her purpose, despatched a copy to be reprinted in Holland, and caused the whole of the impression to be distributed among the electors of the borough of St. Albans.[1]

The scene of a provincial election was not exaggerated by Hogarth. The reader has but to imagine the alehouses crowded with people eating, drinking, and smoking, ballad-singers bawling, hawkers distributing satirical papers among the mob, groups of animated people warmly discussing the merits and demerits of the rival candidates, drunkards reeling about the taverns, butchers enchanting the souls of all true lovers of music with the discordant sounds of marrow-bones and cleavers, gangs of men parading the streets with banners, companies of voters marching up to the hustings to vote with cockades stuck in their head-gear—these he has only to image and he will have the main features of an eighteenth-century election. Add to these the smashing of windows, destruction of the hustings, a free fight, pealing of the church bells, and a banquet when the results were made known, and the picture is complete.

Early in the reign of the second George, Parliament enacted a new statute, aiming at the better regulation of elections and the extirpation of bribery and corrupt practices, which by that time were rampant.[2] And, indeed, it was high time for some reform to be effected in this direction, seeing that the chief features of elections then (as, indeed, they were long afterwards) were such as William Hogarth has so cleverly satirised in a series of four prints, published at different times between 1755 and 1758, and the originals of which may yet be seen in Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and which were doubtless

[1] Chesterfield's *Miscellaneous Works*, ed. Maty, ii. 74. See also a curious instance of caricatures turning the scale in favour of a candidate at an election in Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*, i. 162.

[2] A striking example of the free use which was made in that age of the coin of the realm as a political agent is furnished in a story related by Shippen to the famous Dr. Conyers Middleton, the gist of which was that the Prince of Wales, in order to testify his satisfaction with a speech that the sturdy old Jacobite had delivered, sent him one thousand pounds by the hands of General Churchill, Groom of his Bedchamber. The bribe, however, was refused.

suggested by the fierce contests that followed, in the county of Oxford, the dissolution of Parliament on April 8, 1754. The first of this remarkable series exhibits in all their stern reality the 'Humours of an Election Entertainment'—eating and drinking—this being regarded as matter of primary consideration by electors at this time. For the information of those who may not have seen this masterpiece it may be said that the 'humours,' though far from edifying, are nevertheless mirth-provoking ones.

The scene (says Mr. Joseph Grego, in his entertaining 'History of Parliamentary Elections') embodies gluttony, turbulence, and false patriotism, but bribery and violent intimidation prevail above all. The mayor, who occupies the seat of honour, has succumbed to a surfeit of oysters, and a phlebotomist of the barber tribe is endeavouring to bleed his arm and cool his head at one time.[1] A ministerial looking personage is treated with coarse familiarity, while a youthful aspirant for popular favour is submitting to tipsyfied indignities at the hands of his temporary associates. . . . This modish gentleman has been treating the fair sex to gloves, buff or orange favours, and other gear, from the pack of a pedlar of the Hebrew persuasion, who is also dealing in notes of hand; he holds one for 20*l.* from the candidate, signed 'R. Pention' (Pension being the word). While the Court party is regaling the Buffs, or Old Interest, at the leading tavern, their opponents, the Blues, are making an out-of-door demonstration, so that a view of the humours of both sides is simultaneously afforded. The New Interest procession is composed of 'bludgeon men,' bearing an effigy of the Duke of Newcastle, with the colours of the Old Interest, and a placard round his neck, 'No Jews,' in allusion to the unpopular act introduced by the Pelhams (1752) to permit the naturalisation of foreign Jews. Another cry, inscribed on a blue standard, is 'Liberty and Prosperity,' while a huge blue flag bears the inscription, 'Increase and Multiply in spite of the Devil,' in reference to the recent act for the regulation of marriages which had encountered much opposition and given offence to the multitude. An animated exchange of missiles between the political antagonists is proceeding through the window; those within are standing a siege from showers of bricks, to which they are replying with a volley of fluids and furniture, showered on the heads of the passing patriots; while a rival detachment of Old Interest hirelings, displaying their orange cockades, being armed with oak cudgels, and headed by a partisan with a drawn sword, is sallying forth to make a diversion on the besiegers. A champion orange bludgeon-man, seated on the floor in the foreground, has evidently returned from a raid on the foe, in which he has had his head broken, but he has succeeded in carrying off one of the obnoxious blue standards.

A butcher, with a 'Pro Patria' favour twisted round his neck, is pouring gin upon the bruiser's cracked cranium, which he has first plastered with a 'Your vote and interest' card; the doughty champion is reviving his spirits with the same stimulant; his foot is trampling upon the spoils of victory, the broken staff, and the flag inscribed, 'Give us our eleven days,'—another whimsical popular party cry, explained by the alteration in the style introduced in the session 1751, to correct the calendar according to the Gregorian computation then adopted by most European nations. . . . The business of the meeting, regarding the gluttony and drunkenness among the diversions, is centred in bribery. The Buff parliamentary agent has a seat next the unconscious municipal in the chair; before him is a ledger ruled with columns for 'sure votes,' and 'doubtful.' The occupations of this important factotum are deranged by a flying brick from the opposition, which has struck home on his temple, bringing him down headlong, with destruction to objects around. Amid much horse-play and practical joking—to the strains of an extraordinary orchestra—promises of payment, bank-notes, and broad pieces are being put into circulation. A lean Methodist tailor with Blue sympathies, and who is suffering from qualms of conscience, is placed between two fires, the personal violence of his wife with a half-shod offspring appealing for new shoes, while a clerkly agent is pressing on his acceptance a handful of silver coins to remove his pious scruples.

So much for the first of Hogarth's celebrated Election series. The second scene depicts the 'Canvassing for Votes,' and is full of subtle touches, which shall again be described by the pen of Mr. Grego :—

All the taverns are pressed into the service of the candidates as a matter of course, the enterprising competitors striving to secure the preponderance of publicans, their interest, friends, and followers. . . . The candidate is treating all around; within the inn, as seen in the bar-parlour, his followers are feeding gluttonously; in the balcony above are two fair nymphs whose favour he is conciliating by purchasing trinkets from a Jew pedlar. A farmer voter of some influence, probably a squire of the Tony Lumpkin order, who has ridden into Guzzledown, is making the most of his opportunities; the landlords of the rival inns are ostensibly pressing him to accept invitations to dinner at the respective head-quarters; the host of the Royal Oak is pouring a shower of silver into the receptive palm held out by the wary elector, while the other hand receives the broad golden retainer of the Crown. The landlady has a lapful of money, while one of George's grenadiers is slyly watching the reckoning of the plunder, probably with an eye to spoliation on his own account. The Crown, which is also the Excise Office, is the scene of an animated contest; rival bludgeon-men are in fierce conflict at the doorway, furniture and stones are being thrown about, and a man from the window is

discharging a gun into the thick of the fray below—an allusion to a murderous episode which really occurred. The sign of the Crown, suspended on a huge beam, is in process of removal; a man above, on the wrong side of the support, is sawing it through, while confederates below are dragging it down by force.

The Polling Booth forms the subject of the third picture of Hogarth's Election series :—

Within, seated at the back on a raised platform, are the sheriffs or bailiffs with whom the election rests, and their attendant the beadle ; in the front are the poll-clerks, with their register books, and the lawyers to see the testaments duly offered for attesting the oath ; in the left corner, a veteran (the Militia Bill peeps out of his pocket), who has lost both arms and one leg, is touching the testament with the iron hook which does duty for his missing hand ; the clerk is trying to stifle his laughter, while the opposition lawyer is energetically protesting against this proceeding as informal. . . . A pitiable idiot, in a hopeless stage of imbecility, is brought up to the poll in a chair ; this poor creature's mind is too far gone to distinguish between his right and left hands. . . . Another victim, evidently on the verge of dissolution, is smuggled up to the booth in an unconscious state, wrapped in a blanket, and carried by two repulsive ruffians.

The ceremony of 'Chairing the successful Candidate' is the theme of the concluding picture of the series. According to Mr. Grego, Hogarth fixed upon the celebrated George Bubb Dodington (afterwards Lord Melcombe Regis) as the hero of this scene. Here we behold the hero of the hour (who looks anything but heroic), seated in a huge armchair, which is being borne perilously aloft on the shoulders of four men who are followed by a drunken and infuriated rabble, comprising all the elements of an election triumph—rough music of marrowbones and cleavers, True Blue flags, plenty of bludgeon-men, while a 'blockhead wearing the buff favour of their opponents is carried to ridicule the opposition.'[1] Wherever party spirit was strong, there riots and disturbances were certain to form the chief part of the entertainment, not unfrequently with the breaking of heads, street-fighting, the burning of polling stations, and even loss of life, to boot.

It needs scarcely be said that the expenditure involved in the task of contesting a borough in those degenerate times was

[1] Grego, *Hist. Parl. Elections*, pp. 144–9.

'prodigious,' as Dominie Sampson would have said; nor is it necessary to dwell upon the fact that the sciences of bribery and corruption were never objects of greater unremitting study and attention. Some excuse for this may be urged on the ground that the nation had not yet asserted its capacity to govern itself. The middle classes, too, had not yet become the great factor in the current of internal politics that they have since become. Voting in accordance with conscience and conviction was unknown. Constituents, when they voted, did so, as a rule, from mean and base motives, from private and personal corruption. Thomas Wright, in his 'Caricature History of the Georges,' quotes from the issue of the 'Flying Post' for January 27, 1715, the subjoined 'Bill of Costs for a late Tory Election in the West.' It is on the face of it nothing more than a caricature, but it is full of suggestion notwithstanding :—

| | £ | *s.* | *d.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Imprimis*, for bespeaking and collecting a mob | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Item for many suits of knots for their heads . | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| For scores of huzza-men . . . . . | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| For roarers of the word 'Church' . . . | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| For a set of 'No Roundhead' roarers . . | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| For several gallons of Tory punch on Church tombstones . . . . . | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| For a majority of clubs and brandy bottles . | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| For bellringers, fiddlers, and porters . . | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| For a set of coffee-house praters . . . | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| For extraordinary expense for cloths and laced hats on show days to dazzle the mob | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| For Dissenters' damners . . . . . | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| For demolishing two houses . . . . . | 200 | 0 | 0 |
| For committing two riots . . . . . | 200 | 0 | 0 |
| For secret encouragement to the rioters . | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| For a dozen of perjury men . . . . | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| For packing and carriage paid to Gloucester | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| For breaking windows . . . . . | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| For a gang of aldermen abusers . . . | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| For a set of notorious liars . . . . | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| For pot ale . . . . . | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| For law and charges in the King's Bench . | 300 | 0 | 0 |
| | £1,460 | 0 | 0 |

Parliamentary reform was not yet included in the scheme of practical politics. A large majority of the more intelligent

people of the country, although fully cognisant of the bribery of all sorts and forms which attended the system of popular representation, were opposed to any measure of reform. Rotten boroughs abounded in all directions. In some places five men returned two members. One borough, containing about twenty hovels, had its full representation, while six or seven large prosperous towns in the immediate neighbourhood were not represented at all. Boroughs were openly bought and sold. The most ready purchasers of boroughs, at that time, were what were known as 'nabobs'—servants of the East India Company, who, after years of absence, returned home to their fatherland, laden with gold and riches, squeezed from the native population in Hindostan—whose practice it was to purchase them, and after having 'cultivated' them, as it was termed, to dispose of them at the highest price they could. In the published correspondence of the Earl of Chesterfield, there is a letter addressed by him to his son from Bath, dated December 19, 1767, containing a passage which vouches for the truth of this :—

In one of our conversations here this time twelvemonth (he writes), I desired him (i.e. Lord Chatham) to secure you a seat in the new Parliament ; he assured me he would, and, I am convinced, very sincerely ; he said even that he would make it his own affair, and desired I would give myself no more trouble about it. Since that I have heard no more of it, which made me look out for some venal borough ; and I spoke to a borough-jobber, and offered five-and-twenty hundred pounds for a secure seat in Parliament. But he laughed at my offer, and said that there was no such thing as a borough to be had now ; for the rich East and West Indians had secured them all, at the rate of three thousand pounds at least, but many at four thousand, and two or three, that he knew, at five thousand. This, I confess, has vexed me a good deal, and made me the more impatient to know whether Lord C—— had done anything in it.[1]

George Bubb Dodington, in his 'Diary,' under date of April 8, 1754, writes as follows :—

Arrived at Eastbury. 11.—Dr. Sharp and I set out from Eastbury at four o'clock in the morning for Bridgwater, where, as I

[1] *Chesterfield's Letters*, ed. 1777, iv. 253.

expected, I found things very disagreeably framed. 12.—Lord Egmont came with trumpets, noise, &c. 13.—He and we walked the town: we found nothing unexpected as far as we went. 14, 15, 16.—Spent in the infamous and disagreeable compliance with the low habits of venal wretches. 17.—Came on the election, which I lost by the injustice of the returning officer. The numbers were for Lord Egmont 119, for Mr. Balch 114, for me 105. Of my good votes 15 were rejected; 8 bad votes for Lord Egmont were received. 18.—Left Bridgwater for ever. Arrived at Eastbury in the evening.[1]

A chapter of woes truly! Subsequently Dodington writes, under date of June 1, that his expenses amounted in all to three thousand four hundred pounds.

'After seeing the pictures of Hogarth,' wrote James Hannay, 'a spectator is prepared for any election anecdote that the last century can produce. There are plenty to be got, and the only difficulty is to select them in reasonable numbers.'[2] A very good anecdote is related by Southey. It is as follows: 'Andrew Robinson Bowes once stood for Newcastle. A cargo of Newcastle freemen were shipped from London for his opponent, and the master was bribed by Bowes to carry them to Ostend, where they remained till the election was over.'[3] The Rev. William Cole, writing to Horace Walpole on May 14, 1780, told him that electioneering madness and faction were then inflaming the county of Cambridge to such a degree that the peace it had enjoyed for above half a century might take as long a time before it returned again.[4]

A most disgraceful case of corrupt practices in the borough of New Shoreham was laid before Parliament in the early part of the reign of George III. The returning officer, a man named Roberts, had had the audacity to declare a candidate as duly elected who had polled only thirty-seven votes, in the face of his opponent having received eighty-seven votes. When he was tried for this, it appeared that a considerable number of the freemen belonged to a society known as the Christian Club, a select committee of the members of which had been

[1] *Bubb Dodington's Diary*, ed. N. P. Wyndham, p. 150.
[2] *Essays*, p. 143, 'Electioneering.'
[3] *Commonplace Book*, series iv. p. 392.
[4] *Walpole's Letters*, ed. Cunningham, vii. 402.

appointed to sell the borough to the highest bidder. Personally, the committee never made their appearance at the elections. All that they did was to issue orders to the rest, indicating to them the manner in which they were to vote, and when the election concluded they shared the profits. The returning officer received a severe reprimand, and a bill was introduced for the disqualification of eighty freemen of the borough from ever afterwards voting at an election, while the attorney-general instituted legal proceedings against the committee of the Christian Club.

Heinrich Groenvelt, a German gentleman, who resided in London between the years 1789 and 1790, in the seventeenth of a series of letters written to a friend embodying his observations on English manners, laws, and constitution, says: 'The common price of a seat was, I am informed, at the last election' (he wrote in July, 1790) 'four thousand five hundred or five thousand pounds.' He takes care to mention that in former days the prices had been much lower, and that they had risen in consequence of so many individuals returning home from India laden with riches, and burning with covetousness for a seat in the legislative assembly. Occasionally a borough proprietor who had involved himself in difficulties would sell not merely a seat for one parliament, but his entire interest in it—that is to say, the perpetual right of representing a constituency in Parliament. Boroughs in this way were secured by the Admiralty, the Treasury, and the Ordnance.

The disorderly scenes, the noise and bustle amidst the clamour of parties contending for power which disgraced the most popular elections, were not at that time confined merely to the towns themselves. They spread to all the adjoining villages and hamlets. The high road leading to the metropolis was fairly alive with chaises and coaches, crammed full of men wearing ribbons in their hats, singing and shouting in honour of those for whom they intended to vote. The strange part of the matter was that none of these even lived within ten miles of the town for which they had the right of voting. To its interests, to its politics, and indeed to everything which related to it, they were utter strangers, and would have had no

business within its gates at all had they not been created burgesses or freemen by the candidates, and hired by them.

It was in the expenses to and fro of these so-called freemen that candidates for parliamentary laurels at that time found one of the most terrific headings of expenditure, in paying the much dreaded bill of electioneering costs. Lord Dundonald has recorded in his Autobiography that when he was engaged in canvassing the constituents of Honiton on the eve of a general election in 1805, an 'independent elector' remarked, 'You need not ask me, my lord, who I votes for; I always votes for Mister Most.' Doubtless many another independent elector did the same.

In the interesting biography of William Wilberforce by his two sons, it is recorded that in 1780, when he was in his twentieth year, the ardent youth resolved to enter upon public life,

and as a speedy dissolution was expected, commenced a canvass for the representation of his native town (i.e. Hull) in Parliament. After meeting with much success on the spot, he repaired to London, where about three hundred Hull *freemen* resided in the vicinity of the river; *these he entertained at suppers in the different public-houses of Wapping*, and by his addresses to them first gained confidence in public speaking. . . . As the summer advanced he returned to Hull, with the most flattering prospects of suceess. . . . The election opportunely followed; and on September 11 he was engaged in all the bustle of a sharp contest. Against him were arrayed the interest of Lord Rockingham, the most powerful nobleman in the county, that of Sir George Savile, its wealthy and respected representative, himself a frequent resident at Hull, and that of Government. . . . Yet such was the command he (Wilberforce) had established over the affections of his townsmen, that at the close of the poll the numbers were—William Wilberforce 1,126, Lord Robert Manners 673, David Hartley 453. This election cost him between 8,000*l.* and 9,000*l.* By long established custom the single vote of a resident elector was rewarded with a donation of two guineas; four were paid for a plumper, and the expenses of a freeman's journey from London averaged 10*l.* a-piece. *The letter of the law was not broken, because the money was not paid until the last day on which election petitions could be presented.*[1]

Later in life, Wilberforce was loud in his denunciations of this system, and was heard to declare that rather than enter on a public career again by such means, he would have shunned publicity altogether.

[1] *Life*, chaps. i. and ii.

In 1784 Richard Brinsley Sheridan was returned once more for the borough of Stafford, and the following document, transcribed from the biography of him which was written by Thomas Moore, has reference to his election :—

*R. B. Sheridan, Esq.*

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expenses at the Borough of Stafford for election, anno 1784, 248 burgesses paid 5*l.* 5*s.* 0*d.* each. | 1,302 | 0 | 0 |
| Yearly expenses since :— | | | |
| House rent and taxes . . . 23 6 6 | | | |
| Servant at 6*s.* per week, board wages 15 12 6 | | | |
| Ditto, yearly wages . . . . 8 0 0 | | | |
| Coals, &c. . . . . 10 0 0 | | | |
| | 57 | 18 | 6 |
| Ale tickets . . . . . 40 0 0 | | | |
| Half the members' plate . . . 25 0 0 | | | |
| Swearing young burgesses . . 10 0 0 | | | |
| Subscription to the Infirmary . . 5 5 0 | | | |
| Ditto clergymen's widows . . . 2 2 0 | | | |
| Ringers . . . . . 4 4 0 | | | |
| | 86 | 11 | 0 |
| One year . . . . . 143*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* | | | |
| Multiplied by years 6 | | | |
| | 863 | 5 | 0 |
| Total expense of six years' parliament, exclusive of expenses incurred during the time of election, and your own annual expenses | £2,309 | 14 | 6 |

The late Colchester election (says a paragraph in the 'Public Advertiser' for December 13, 1790) is likely to turn out more expensive than usual to the candidates. It has already cost one of the sitting members (Mr. Thornton) sixteen thousand pounds ; and as there is a petition before the House from Mr. Tierney, the merits of which are yet to be discussed, it is possible the expenses may run hard upon twenty thousand before the close of the contest.

The amount of liquor which was consumed during election time was enormous. Brandy was quaffed by the anker and ale by the hogshead. Judge Curwen has recorded that he was told in 1784, by a Mr. Cooper, the owner of a large London wine vault, that at contested elections it was commonly the case for six thousand hogsheads of port wine extra to be consumed by the voters.[1]

[1] *Journal*, p. 399.

It may fairly be questioned whether any of the electoral contests of the eighteenth century equalled that of Westminster in 1784, in point of the prevalence of corrupt practices, drunkenness, tumult, and disorder. During the course of that year, an appeal to the country was made by George III. and William Pitt, the leader of the Tory party, against Charles James Fox and the Opposition. Fox and Sir Cecil Wray had represented the city of Westminster in the parliament which had then been recently dissolved, and the king was determined that Fox should be excluded from a seat in the new one. Fox, however, who had been already elected for Kirkwall, was bent on standing, so were Sir Cecil Wray and Admiral Hood. Dr. Johnson, writing to Boswell on March 30, said:—'We are, as you may suppose, all busy here. Mr. Fox resolutely stands for Westminster, and, his friends say, will carry the election.' All Fools' Day, 1784, witnessed the opening of the polling, which lasted unintermittently for the space of forty days, ending May 17, and during the long period over which it extended, the entire western quarter of the metropolis and Covent Garden, the immediate vicinity of the hustings, presented a scene of uproar and disorder which it is difficult to describe. The latter locality might appropriately have been styled 'Bear Garden' for the time being, so flagrant were the outrages against decency, and so riotous was the violence of which it was the scene.

A large quarto volume dedicated 'to the free and independent electors of the city and liberty of Westminster,' published anonymously during the course of the following year, professes to narrate the history of this remarkable election, and records every material occurrence from the time that it began to the time that it ended. It appears that the efforts on the part of the friends of the two ministerial candidates during the first four or five days were so successful that they left Fox at unmeasurable distance. Then the reaction set in; Fox steadily gained ground until he had secured a majority of 236 votes over his rival, Sir Cecil Wray.

To detail fully the chief features of this election would

require more space than can here be afforded. Those who are accustomed to modern electioneering contests can have hardly any conception of what this was. Trade in the streets adjacent to Covent Garden, where the hustings had been erected, was suspended. Sobriety and peace were banished. The shops were closed. They who took, or who were suspected of taking, an active part in the cause of either candidate prudently secured their doors and windows against the expected attacks of the ruffians employed by those who entertained different views. Mobs, headed by blackguards from the recesses of Tothill Fields and St. Giles's and organised under the designation of bludgeon-men, paraded the streets, dressed as sailors or mechanics, as occasion required, and, so far as creating disturbances, and in intimidating and jostling such voters as dared to poll in opposition to the interest of those by whom they had been employed was concerned, acted their part to perfection. Voters by the hundred attended the poll in procession, preceded by bands playing melodious strains with marrow-bones and cleavers, fifes, trumpets, and drums. Fox delivered speeches daily to the assembled mob. From the window of every tavern and public-house in the locality there streamed a coloured banner, and the sound of drunken revelry proceeded thence not only by night, but also by day. At an early stage, several ladies of high degree who had espoused the cause of Fox threw themselves into the struggle, and regularly they were driven up to the hustings in their carriages smothered with blue and buff colours. Day after day the beautiful and accomplished Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire, the Countesses of Carlisle and Derby, the Lady Beauchamp, and the Lady Duncannon, each displaying the brush of a fox in their hats, might have been seen soliciting votes in the interest of 'the man of the people' from house to house, a spectacle which moved one gallant squib-writer of the time to pen the following epigram :—

> Arrayed in matchless beauty, Devon's fair,
> In Fox's favour takes a zealous part,
> But oh ! where'er the pilferer comes, beware !
> She supplicates a vote, and steals a heart.

And another to write this :—

Sure heaven approves of Fox's cause,
(Though slaves at court abhor him),
To vote for Fox, then, who can pause,
Since *Angels* canvass for him.[1]

And a third to pen the following lines :—

The gentle Beauchamp and the fair Carlisle
Around their favoured Fox expecting wait ;
And Derby's lip suspends the ready smile,
To ask the 'Poll?' and 'What is Charles's fate?'

But say, ye belles, whose beauty all admit,
Do you in politics dispute the prize ;
Or do you near the hustings proudly sit,
To take the suffrage of admiring eyes?

During the poll it was reported that a butcher having promised the Duchess of Devonshire a plumper on condition that she would favour him with a kiss, her Grace bade him take one, and this, being recorded in the columns of the 'Morning Post,' the principal Tory journal, was elaborated and exaggerated to a shameful extent by the caricaturists. Many good sayings were circulated during this election. A gentleman meeting an old acquaintance walking to the hustings in Covent Garden, said, 'So you are going to vote for that sad dog Charles Fox?' 'I am determined, sir,' replied the other, 'to give Mr. Fox my vote, not because he is a sad dog, but for a better reason—he is a good house dog—I mean House of Commons' dog.' Fox, in the course of his canvass, having accosted a blunt tradesman, whom he solicited for his vote, the man answered, 'I cannot give you my support ; I admire your abilities, but dislike your principles.' To which Fox smartly replied, 'My friend, I applaud you for your sincerity, but dislike your manners.' Here is another. Fox, having applied to a saddler in the Haymarket for his vote and interest, the man produced a halter, with which he said 'he was ready to oblige him.' 'I return you thanks, my friend,' replied Fox, 'but I should be sorry to deprive you of it, and presume it must be a family piece.' One journal declared that the current prices of Westminster voters as settled by committee, from Spitalfields and parts adjacent, were 7*s.* 6*d.*; from Old Gravel

[1] *Hist. of Westm. Election*, p. 483.

Lane, Whitechapel, Field Lane, and Black Boy Alley, a quart of gin and bitters hot with nutmeg; and from Kent Street to Mayfair, two drams of usquebaugh.

At three o'clock on May 17, 1784, the poll closed, and the High Bailiff declared the results to be these :—

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Hood . . . . | 6,694 |
| Hon. Charles James Fox . . | 6,234 |
| Sir Cecil Wray . . . . | 5,998 |
| Majority for Fox . | 236 |

The popular enthusiasm when these results were proclaimed knew no bounds. As soon as 'the man of the people' had quitted the vestry, his friends, who were assembled to the number of many thousands, insisted on chairing him, and the grandest spectacle ensued which a contemporaneous writer declares he ever saw on any similar occasion. The streets were lined with carriages and choked with the multitudes of spectators. The route of the procession was round Covent Garden, down Russell and Catharine Streets into the Strand, along Charing Cross, down Parliament Street, round the end of Great George Street, and back to Charing Cross. In the afternoon of the eventful day Judge Curwen saw the procession just beginning to march by from Westminster Hall in the following order :— The officers of each parish distinct, with their peculiar standards, attending two and two, with wands in their hands; band of music; next, gentlemen on horseback; then others on foot; in the rear was Mr. Byng, whose appearance was announced by '*Byng and Fox for ever!*' Then followed a number of horsemen; next Mr. Fox, mounted on a lofty chair woven with a laurel bower which almost encompassed him; soon after appeared a lofty white silk banner with the inscription '*Sacred to Female Patriotism,*' and was immediately followed by the Duchesses of Portland and Devonshire in their laurel-festooned coaches, each drawn by six horses; the whole concluded with about thirty private carriages. An innumerable crowd attended, with vociferous acclamations, but there was neither riot nor mobbing, Government having wisely provided the horse and foot-guards.[1]

[1] *Journal and Letters of S. Curwen*, p. 405.

From Westminster the procession wended its way back to Pall Mall along Piccadilly, round Berkeley Square; back through Berkeley Street, and into Devonshire House courtyard, where the various banners formed in front, while Fox, alighting from his chair, ascended the steps, and joined his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Lady Duncannon, and a train of other illustrious beauties who were assembled on the platform in order to greet the arrival of their favourite representative. After Fox had here addressed his friends 'in an elegant speech, most cordially thanking them for the high honour they had conferred upon him,' the procession wended its way 'to Willis's spacious room in King Street, where they sat down to dinner about eight in the evening, and the night was spent with unusual exhilaration.' The Prince of Wales celebrated Fox's victory on the following day by giving a grand dinner to the nobility and gentry, in the gardens attached to Carlton House, and Mrs. Crewe, a celebrated beauty of the day, gave expression to her satisfaction at the result by entertaining her numerous friends and admirers at a select ball, and supper. Thus ended the memorable Westminster election of 1784, one of the keenest contests that ever took place in this country, and one of the most important events in the political history of the eighteenth century.[1]

Among the poet Cowper's published correspondence there is a letter containing a very amusing account of a visit which he received from a parliamentary candidate at Olney in March 1784. Writing to his friend the Rev. John Newton on the 20th of that month, he said :—

> As when the sea is uncommonly agitated, the water finds its way into creeks and holes of rocks, which in its calmer state it never reaches, in like manner the effect of these turbulent times is felt even at Orchardside, where in general we live as undisturbed by the political element as shrimps or cockles that have been accidentally deposited in some hollow beyond the watermark by the usual dashing of the waves. We were sitting yesterday after dinner, the two ladies

[1] This election was followed by a scrutiny which occupied nearly twelve months. See *Ann. Reg.* 1784–5, pp. 174–80; Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*, i. 172; and *Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27837 and 27849, pp. 106–19.

and myself, very composedly, and without the least apprehension of any such intrusion in our snug parlour, one lady knitting, the other netting, and the gentleman winding worsted, when to our unspeakable surprise a mob appeared before the window; a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys halloo'd, and the maid announced Mr. G——. Puss [the poet's tame hare] was unfortunately let out of her box, so that the candidate, with all his good friends at his heels, was refused admittance at the grand entry, and referred to the back door as the only possible way of approach. Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather, I suppose, climb in at a window than be absolutely excluded. In a minute the yard, the kitchen, and the parlour were filled. Mr. G——, advancing toward me, shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he and as many as could find chairs were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit. I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit. I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less no doubt because Mr. A——, addressing himself to me at that moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing it, I ventured to confirm my first assertion by saying that if I had any I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be, or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference. Mr. G—— squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies, and withdrew. He kissed, likewise, the maid in the kitchen, and seemed upon the whole a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman. He is very young, genteel, and handsome. He has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which not being sufficient, as it should seem, for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he wore suspended by a riband from his buttonhole. The boys halloo'd, the dogs barked, puss scampered, the hero with his long train of obsequious followers withdrew. We made ourselves very merry with the adventure, and in a short time settled into our former tranquillity, never probably to be thus interrupted more.[1]

Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, recorded in his 'Diary,' under date of June 27, 1796, the following entry :—

The Helston election came on at eleven. The Corporation assembled at the inn, and we all proceeded to the hall. Of the nineteen electors, sixteen were present. The absentees were, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Hall (detained by the gout at Penzance). The election was unanimous. We had been previously desired not to give any election entertainment, but to commute that expense for a subscription of one hundred guineas each to remove the Cornage Hall and rebuild it in a more convenient part of the town.

[1] *Cowper's Letters*, ed. Johnson, 1820, pp. 222-3.

A gentleman named Burton, dining with his lordship a month later, showed him his Oxford election bills, which proved that the three days' joint canvass and two days of election for Burton and Annesley's committee of charges was 600*l.*, after which, the interest of Messrs. Burton and Annesley having been separated, the charges incurred between the evening of the second day of election and the middle of the third day, when it closed, were 1,108*l.*, to which must be added about 400*l.* as London expenses.[1]

To say that corruption at that time spread from the members to the electors, and from ministers to members, is merely to state a fact already fully well known to anyone acquainted with the merest outline of the political history of the period. The constituent body was lamentably corrupt enough. The representative was even more so. From the accession of George I. until nearly that of George III., the Whig ministry contrived to hold office by a shamelessly organised system of bribery and corruption. A minister desirous of obtaining a majority or of maintaining it bought the votes of the legislative assembly. Nor was he then considered immoral in so doing. No minister was really able to govern by any other means. When Sir Robert Walpole, who maintained that all men had their price, gave a parliamentary dinner, the eyes of each guest on taking up his napkin would alight on a bill for 500*l.* That this system of secret service money might be supported the nation was fleeced without mercy. No wonder the House of Commons looked askance at the proposal to institute an inquiry into Sir Robert's practices when at last he fell. Members of Parliament themselves were far too vulnerable for an impartial investigation to be either expedient or advisable. It must not be forgotten that in that age both ministerial and parliamentary virtues were constituted upon a far lower scale than they fortunately have been since a fearless newspaper press and a vigilant public began to scrutinise the conduct of every man who is elevated to a position of trust. If any decided proof of this were needed, it would be furnished in a fact, universally known, that

[1] Lord Colchester's *Diary*, i. 62.

the combinations of political party in these times are based so much more upon principle than they are upon personal connections. If by any chance they happen to be based upon the latter, the pretext of principle is always used as an ægis to be thrown over such arrangements as the improved character of the age will no longer countenance. Statesmen of the last century, like Gallio of old, cared for none of these things. Horace Walpole mentions that it was commonly asserted at the accession of George III. in 1760 that England was swayed by two hundred noblemen who were in receipt from the Government of more than they gave to it. These two hundred noblemen supported their influence in their respective towns and boroughs by wholesale corruption, and by that means secured the votes of every political partisan, from the highest grade to the lowest. What was said of the French before the first great revolution might have been said with equal truth of English statesmen of the eighteenth century, namely, that 'no one was so great as to be beyond the hatred of a minister, nor so little as to escape the notice of a comptroller of excise.'

Some very curious particulars respecting the cost of elections are supplied in a draft or copy of a letter from Lord North to King George III. relative to his accounts, showing that the King organised a course of secret corruption. In a letter to that minister, dated April 18, 1782, his Majesty used these words:—'As to the immence [*sic*] expense of the general election, it has quite surprised me; the sum is at least double of what was expended any other general election since I came to the throne, and by the fate of the last month proves most uselessly.'

Lord North in replying said:—

As to the election accounts, Lord N. never received it [*sic*] till he sent it to his M——y on March 27 last. He had for some months past pressed Mr. R. to let him see it [*sic*], but Mr. R. was not able to give him a complete state of it before. If Lord N. had thought that the expense attending elections and re-elections in the years 1779, 1780, and 1781 would have amounted to 72,000*l.*, he certainly would not have advised his Majesty to have embarked in any such expense. He begs, however, a few moments of his M——y's attention to state some circumstances which may in a

degree account for the largeness of the sum in the election account. That account contains, besides the expenses attending the general election, the expense of the Hampshire contest in 1779, and of the elections of Bristol, Coventry, and Gloucestershire, together with about 2,000*l.* for sundry smaller elections. The 2,000*l.* sent to the Duke of Chandos and Sir R. Worsley in Hampshire bore, as Lord North fears, a very small part of this expense. Mr. Chester, in the great contest for Gloucestershire, has, it is said, spent from 20 to 30,000*l.* The sitting members for Coventry had stood three contested elections, two trials before the committee, and a long examination at the bar of the House in the course of a year and a half before they made any application. They then received 2,000*l.* The general election at Bristol cost but 1,000*l.* to Government, but Mr. H. Lippingcot's death bringing on a fresh contest on the back of the former, the merchants of Bristol, who had contributed largely to the first contest, as well as to many loyal subscriptions, thought they might without impropriety apply for assistance. They received at different times 5,000*l.* . . . The expense of the Westminster amounted to more than 8,000*l.*; Surrey to 4,000*l.*; the city to 4,000*l.*; the amount of all three to more than 16,000*l.*; . . . unhappily not successful. If Lord N. remembers correctly, the last general election cost near 50,000*l.* to the Crown, beyond which expense there was a pension of 1,000*l.* a year to Lord Montacute and 500*l.* a year to Mr. Selwyn for their interest at Midhurst and Luggershall. The elections in 1779, and 1780, and 1781 will cost 53,000*l.*; but then there have been no additional pensions promised.[1]

Further evidence of this organised system of bribery and corruption is supplied in the appendix to the sixth part of the tenth report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. Mr. H. Maxwell Lyte, while investigating the Marquis of Abergavenny's manuscripts, preserved at Eridge Castle, near Tunbridge Wells, discovered the political correspondence between Lord North and John Robinson, who for many years held the office of Secretary to the Treasury, and from this it appears plainly that under his management was placed a secret fund devoted to securing the election to Parliament of candidates who were favourable to the policy of the Government.

Writing to John Robinson from Islip on October 5, 1774, Lord North said :—

My noble friend [Lord Falmouth] is rather shabby in desiring guineas instead of pounds. . . . If he persists I would not have the

[1] *Correspondence of George III. with Lord North*, ed. W. B. Donne, ii. 424-6.

bargain go off on so slight a difference. . . . I have promised Mr. Graves that he shall come in for East Looe as soon as we can place Sir Charles Whitworth in any other seat. Lord Boston will pay 2,000*l.* for Mr. Irby.

On October 6, 1774, his lordship wrote to the same correspondent as follows :—

Mr. Legge can afford only 400*l.* If he comes in for Lostwithiel he will cost the public 2,000 guineas. Gascoign should have the refusal of Tregony if he will pay 1,000*l.*, but I do not see why we should bring him in cheaper than any other servant of the Crown. If he will not pay we must give way to Mr. Best or Mr. Peachy. Arrangements for the boroughs of Minehead, Plympton, Lostwithiel, East Looe, and Tregony.

On November 19, 1774, he wrote to the same :—

Let Cooper know whether you promised Masterman 2,500*l.* or 3,000*l.* for each of Lord Edgcumbe's seats. I was going to pay him 12,500*l.*, but he demanded 15,000*l.*

Again on May 20, 1776, he said :—

Sir Ralph Payne is eager for the seat [at St. German's]. If Mr. E[liot] does not approve of him, you had better 'liquidate' with him as he proposes. Mr. P[ownall] having sat but one session out of six, I suppose Mr. E[liot] will not object to return 2,500*l.*, which is the just proportion of the sum originally paid.

On December 12, 1779, Sir Richard Worsley wrote from Avington to Lord North to this effect :—

Notwithstanding the most favourable returns made by my agents, I find myself involved in an expense beyond the reach of my present fortune. Without the assistance of Government I shall not be able to carry on the poll above two days. My adversaries seem determined to protract it. They have retained five counsel. I have by me the sum of 6,000*l.*, which I am very ready to exhaust in the cause.

With a letter dated Winchester, September 10, 1780, from C. Jenkinson to John Robinson, was enclosed another from John Cator to the Right Hon. C. Jenkinson, dated September 8, in which he stated that he had risked his seat in order to get a friend in, and desired to be assisted to another at a moderate expense. The price of a close borough seems to have ranged between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.* On one occasion, as we have seen, an arrangement between Lord North and Lord Falmouth

nearly fell through because the latter claimed to be paid in guineas.

Lord North, writing to John Robinson from Waldershare on October 1, 1781, said :—

I have quite done with elections in London. We have now been led three or four times into idle and foolish expenses there at a time when the principal persons in the city, after having embarked Government, have seemed not very earnest themselves, as Mr. Harley showed himself in the last instance, by going out of town in the midst of the poll. In this case of Colchester I am inclined to give way. . . . The sum, however, must be limited, and should not exceed 1,500*l.* or 2,000*l.* at the most.[1]

Among the manuscripts discovered at Lansdowne House by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, when engaged in collecting materials for his Life of the Earl of Shelburne, afterwards first Marquis of Lansdowne, was a paper of reflections upon men and things, penned during the brief leisure that was afforded him from the cares and anxieties of parliamentary life. A short passage of arithmetical considerations concerning boroughs is worthy of transcription :—

Family boroughs (by which I mean boroughs which lie naturally within the reach of cultivation of any house or property) are supposed to cost nothing ; but I am sure from my own experience and observation that if examined into, they will be found to cost as much as the purchase of any burgage tenure whatever, by means of what I term 'insensible inspiration.' Like public taxes, the amount is not perceived for a great while, and by some people not at all, because it consists in paying always a little, and most commonly *a great deal too much* on every article, and in every transaction you are *confined to a particular set of tradesmen*, and *often to their connections in town*, and can never control their charges. The rents of houses and lands must be governed by the moderation of voters. You must be forthcoming on every occasion, not only of distress but of fancy, to subscribe too largely to roads, as well as to every other project which may be started by the idlest of the people ; add to this livings, favours of all sorts from Government, and stewardships if there is an intriguing attorney in the town, who under the name of your agent will deprive you of all manner of free agency upon your own property, and sometimes of the property itself if it is a small one ; without mentioning the charge and domestic disorder attending a great deal of obscure hospitality, and a never-ceasing management of men and things. And after all, when the

[1] *Hist. MSS. Comm.* 10*th Report*, Appendix, part vi. pp. 6-45 ; see also the recently published *Correspondence of Mrs. Osborne*, *passim*.

crisis comes, you are liable to be outbid by any nabob or adventurer, and you must expect all that you have done to go for nothing, and the most you can look for is a preference. What can you say to a blacksmith who has seven children, or to a common labouring man who is offered 700*l.* for his vote ; or to two misers who are offered 2,000*l.*, *which are all instances distinctly upon record at Wycombe since Mr. Dashwood's election*?[1]

What the violence of the mob was at elections, none but those who attended them can tell :—

A few days ago (wrote Mrs. Delany to her friend Mrs. Dewes, from Bulstrode, on December 4, 1749), the Duke of C—— went with some ladies in his coach to see the election, and the mob took them for foreigners, called them French, and was going to pull them out of the coach, but on their vowing they were English they let them alone.[2]

The interference of the clergy often formed a striking feature of an eighteenth-century election. The parsons were frequently to be seen deeply engrossed in party politics, canvassing their parishioners, encouraging mobs, and frequenting taverns and alehouses. In consequence, their names were bandied, and their foibles exposed in coarse electioneering squibs, in a manner far from creditable to themselves or favourable to the cause of religion.

Judge Curwen, being on a visit to Exeter in the early part of November 1776, was a witness of the modes and methods which the 1,400 free and enlightened electors of that venerable city pursued in the contest of two competitors, Baring and Cholwich, for the representation of it in Parliament in the room of Waters.

Amongst other instances of management in electioneering (he wrote in his Journal) is the practice of closeting and locking up, beds being provided in secure apartments to prevent the voters being spirited away to the other side, of which there have been some instances, after the expense of fetching them in from distant parts.

The majority of the City Chamber espoused the cause of Cholwich. The Church party espoused that of Baring. The contest was a very fierce one, resulting in many wounds, several broken heads, but no loss of life. On November 9 Judge Curwen records in his 'Journal' that he 'walked out to the

[1] Lord E. Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, ii. 362, 363.
[2] *Autob. and Corr.* 1st series, ii. 527.

Guildhall to see the conclusion of the poll ended by the Sheriff's declaring Mr. Baring duly elected, the excess being 101 votes. The unsuccessful candidate, Mr. Cholwich, supported by the City Chamber, went home to put as good a face on their disappointment as they could, amidst loud huzzas, flags displayed having various devices. Mr. Baring was accompanied by a numerous crowd, said to be 10,000, huzzaing, clapping hands, &c. The house he adjourned to was in the yard next to ours, and to honour him variegated lamps were suspended in front, forming these words, "*Baring for ever!*" surmounted by a crown. The evening closed with a grand display of fireworks.'[1] Curwen noted that the next day was ushered in by music and a procession carrying flags inscribed with the legend 'Baring and Trade,' that Mr. Baring's male friends wore favours of blue and purple ribbon, and his female friends an emblematical device in allusion to his name, a bear with a ring run through its nose, enamelled pendant on a blue ribbon.

Few towns in England in the eighteenth century could equal Leicester for fiercely contested elections. Those in 1751, in 1768, and in 1790 were accompanied by such scenes of outrage and violence as almost baffle description. In 1790 a severe contest took place between Messrs. Smith, Hallad, Parkins, and Montelieu. After a three weeks' course of bribery, corruption, drunkenness, and uproar, with much copious declamation on the manifold diseases of the body politic included, and after blood had been spilt, and some thousands of pounds expended, each party elected to withdraw a candidate in order that further mischief might not ensue. Accordingly a compromise was made in favour of Messrs. Smith and Parkins, and the rabble, finding their reign was over, forthwith united, and, mad with rage, actually threatened to lay the town in ashes. Their bark fortunately proved, however, to be worse than their bite :—

They broke into the Exchange (says an eye-witness), and threw the books and Corporate papers out of the windows ; another party attacked the assembly rooms, where the committee escaped by con-

[1] Curwen's *Journal and Letters*, pp. 87, 88.

cealing themselves in the roof of the building. The concert library of music-books and instruments were thrown out of the windows and torn into pieces. The whole of the market-place, and all the way to the Coal Hill, appeared as if the ground had been covered with snow, for the Corporation papers thrown out of the Exchange, and the music-books from the assembly rooms on the Coal Hill, torn into small pieces, met at the east gates, and in some places were ankle deep.[1]

A terrible riot took place at Nottingham on June 1790, at the election consequent on the dissolution of Parliament. There were three candidates, Robert Smith (of the firm of Smith, Payne and Smith, bankers, of London and Nottingham), who subsequently became the first Lord Carrington; Daniel Parker Coke, a barrister on the Midland circuit; and Captain Johnston. The first was a Whig, the other two were Tories. On the day of the election, between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, a number of men and boys assembled in the market-place, whence they proceeded deliberately to break the windows of Mr. Smith's residence, and persisted in doing so until the arrival of the constable. At the close of the poll, which lasted a week, Smith was declared elected, and as he was very unpopular with the mob, on account of his haughty demeanour, they proceeded to smash windows, to destroy property, and to insult the townsfolk. As the presence of the civil force could make no impression, the rioters proceeded on their way with impunity. Professor Pryme says that he well recollected on this occasion standing at a window in the market-place and seeing the rioters erect ladders against the Exchange Hall, smash the windows, and seize a large number of constables' staves, which they cut into bludgeons and flung out to their companions who stood below. One of them was aimed at the head of Mr. Smith as he was leaving the hustings in the market-place, and missed it only by the enormous high-crowned hat, such as was then fashionable, that he wore upon his head. The next day, on the renewal of disturbances, the dragoons were sent for, and, becoming irritated, fired upon the mob, killing one man and wounding several others.

[1] Gardiner's *Music and Friends*, i. 208.

Of the re-election of the county members for Nottingham (Lord Edward Bentinck and C. Medows, Esq.) on April 21, 1784, it is stated that when duly elected they proceeded to the Grand Jury Room, and, having seated themselves in their respective chairs, were preceded by flags and music in a triumphal procession down the High Pavement, through Bridlesmith Gate, round the market-place to the White Lion and Blackmoor's Head inns, attended by an immense concourse of people. The chair in which Lord Bentinck sat was remarkably elegant; it was covered with white silk and ingenious devices of orange-coloured ribbon. Mr. Medows's chair was covered with blue silk, and formed a pleasing contrast. When the members had alighted, the chairs, in accordance with ancient custom, were broken up by the populace, and several persons were severely injured in scrambling for pieces to bear away as trophies.[1]

Nor were the Middlesex elections less notorious for the outbursts of popular frenzy and political depravity that they invariably evoked at Brentford. In March 1768, when John Wilkes was returned, the mob pelted young Cooke, the son of the City Marshal, at Hyde Park Corner; knocked him off his horse, broke the wheels of one of the carriages, and shattered the glasses to atoms, merely because a flag had been carried before the procession of Wilkes's opponents, inscribed with the words 'No blasphemer.' At night the rabble paraded the city, obliging every householder to illuminate his residence, and broke the windows of all such as failed to comply with their demands, particularly the residences of Lord Bute, Lord Egremont, Sir Sampson Gideon, Sir William Mayne, and many other gentlemen who resided in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross. The windows of the Mansion House were also smashed. At the Brentford election in the following year a terrible riot arose, in which an attorney's clerk received a fatal blow on the head from a bludgeon. Similar disturbances marked the contests for Middlesex in the years 1790 and 1796.

[1] Sutton's *Nottingham*, p. 157; Cartwright's *Memoirs*, i. 312.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### KING MOB.

Fielding's remarks on the character of the English rabble—Hatred of foreigners—Mob treatment of French visitors to the capital—Review of memorable London riots—Dr. Sacheverel—The Spitalfields weavers—'Wilkes and Liberty'—The Gordon riots of 1780—Testimony of various eye-witnesses adduced—Popular demonstration on minor disturbances—Acquittal of Admiral Keppel—Aristocratic rioters.

Two of the light entertaining essays which Fielding contributed to the 'Covent Garden Journal' contain an amusing disquisition on the rise and progress of the power wielded by 'that very large and powerful body' the English mob, which he humorously dignified with the title of the Fourth Estate. And indeed the application of such an epithet at the time the novelist flourished was by no means so whimsical as at first sight it might appear; for such an important factor was the rabble in the State during the eighteenth century, that it could lay far greater claim to the designation of 'Fourth Estate' than its modern congener the newspaper press. It was like an Æolian harp upon which the breath of public opinion made its discordant music. The principal counts in the novelist's indictment are easily specified. First, their assumption of an exclusive right to the river Thames; secondly, their claim to the exclusive right to the privilege of 'those parts of the streets that are set apart for the foot-passengers;' thirdly, their like pretensions to the possession of the highways; and, fourthly, their 'right of excluding all women of fashion out of St. James's on a Sunday evening.' In regard to their aquatic assumptions, he observes:—

It is true the other estates do sometimes venture themselves upon the river; but this is only upon sufferance; for which they

pay whatever that branch of the Fourth Estate called watermen are pleased to exact of them. Nor are the mob contented with all these exactions. They grumble whenever they meet any persons in a boat. Sometimes they carry their resentment so far as to endeavour to run against the boat and overset it; but if they are too good-natured to attempt this, they never fail to attack the passengers with all kind of scurrilous, abusive, and indecent terms, which, indeed, they claim as their own, and call mob-language.

Fielding concludes his essay by observing that, had it not been for the existence of justices of the peace and the soldiery, two orders of men, of whom it stood in awe, and consequently held in the utmost abhorrence, the Fourth Estate would have succeeded in annihilating all the other estates of the realm.[1]

Contemporary travellers largely corroborate the novelist's statements. One special object of the mob's hatred was the foreigner, especially the Frenchman. 'The rabble are as insolent as can be met with in countries without law or police.' So wrote M. Grosley, who visited England in 1765:—

Inquire of them your way to a street; if it be upon the right they direct you to the left, or they send you from one of their vulgar comrades to another. The most shocking abuse and ill-language make a part of their pleasantry upon these occasions. To be assailed in such manner it is not absolutely necessary to be engaged in conversation with them; it is sufficient to pass by them. My French air, notwithstanding the simplicity of my dress, drew upon me at the corner of every street a volley of abusive litanies, in the midst of which I slipped on, returning thanks to God that I did not understand English. The constant burthen of these litanies was, 'French dog ——;' to make any answer to them was accepting a challenge to fight; and my curiosity did not carry me so far.[2]

The same traveller relates that he was subjected on one occasion at Chelsea to a torrent of abuse from a mob on account of Marshal Saxe; and his friend M. de la Condamine, in like manner, some years before, merely because he carried a kind of ear-trumpet and an unfolded map of the metropolis whenever he stirred out during his stay.

The day after my arrival (says M. Grosley), my servant discovered by sad experience what liberties the mob are accustomed

[1] *Fielding's Works*, ed. Murphy, iv. 406–13.
[2] Grosley, *Observations on England*, 1765, p. 84.

to take with the French, and all who have the appearance of being such. He had followed the crowd to Tyburn, where three rogues were hanged, two of whom were father and son. The execution being over, as he was returning home through Oxford Road with the remains of the numerous multitude which had been present at the execution, he was attacked by two or three blackguards; and the crowd having soon surrounded him, he made a fight for the rabble. Jack Ketch, the executioner, joined in the sport, and entering the circle struck the poor sufferer upon the shoulder. They began to drag him about by the skirts of his coat, and by his shoulder-knot, when, luckily for him, he was perceived by three grenadiers belonging to the French Guards, who, having deserted and crossed the seas, were drinking at an alehouse hard by the scene of action. Armed with such weapons as chance presented them, they suddenly attacked the mob, laid on soundly upon such as came within their reach, and brought their countryman off safe to the alehouse, and from thence to my lodging. . . . He shut himself up in the house a fortnight, where he vented his indignation in continual imprecations against England and the English.

Let us briefly review the chief metropolitan riots of the century comprising the reigns of Anne, George I., George II., and a portion of that of George III.

During the reign of Queen Anne the High Church riots occurred. These were occasioned by the trial of a Tory, Dr. Henry Sacheverel, chaplain of St. Saviour's, Southwark, for preaching treasonable sermons. During the three weeks over which the trial extended, the doctor was escorted to his residence each day by a bodyguard of butchers, who protected his sedan chair from the violence of his Whig adversaries. This trial elevated the doctor to the pedestal of a popular idol. The members of the various Tory clubs, fully impressed with the idea that their enemies were bent upon the doctor's overthrow, lost no opportunity of stirring the passions of the mob to their lowest depth. Before long they raised the old cry of 'The Church in Danger,' and at once every ragamuffin in London hastened to the rescue, in which the Dissenting conventicles were the first to fall. On February 28, 1710, several meeting-houses were forcibly entered by the rabble and razed to the ground, huge bonfires being kindled in all directions, and fed with plentiful supplies of pews, pulpits, benches, cushions, and hymn-books. Long Acre, Shoe Lane, Leather Lane, Lincoln's Inn Fields, Blackfriars and Clerkenwell, Hatton Garden, and

Carey Street were the localities which suffered most from the rioters on this occasion. The shibboleth which proceeded from their mouths, and addressed to the passers-by, was, 'Who are you for? Huzza for Sacheverel and High Church!' Woe betided that individual who dared to avow himself a Whig or a Nonconformist. But the Guards arrived on the scene at last, and captured three of the ringleaders. Queen Anne presented Dr. Sacheverel to the valuable living of St. Andrew's, Holborn, as a reward for 'forcing himself into popularity by the most petulant railings on Dissenters and Low Churchmen.'

The Spitalfields weavers exhibited a very riotous disposition during the first half of the eighteenth century. The first disturbance on their part occurred in 1719. On June 13 in that year their pent-up discontent at the persistence with which fashionable folks continued to wear Indian calicoes and printed linen in preference to those of British manufacture burst forth. To the number of about 4,000, the Spitalfields weavers paraded the streets of the city, violently molesting all females they met wearing Indian calicoes or linens, and sousing them with ink, aqua fortis, and other fluids. These disturbances so alarmed the then Lord Mayor, that he felt bound to request Lord Sunderland to send out train-bands in order to disperse the mob. A troop of horse grenadiers was accordingly despatched to the scene of the riot, and eventually succeeded in securing the persons of two of the ringleaders, whom they promptly committed to the Marshalsea prison. This damped the spirits of the mob, who began to scatter, only to re-assemble when the Guards had returned home, as the following paragraph extracted from the issue of the 'Original Weekly Journal' of June 20, 1719, testifies:—

Last Friday 7-night, when the Guards were returned to Whitehall, the weavers got together again, tearing all the calico gowns that they could meet with, which occasioned a strong detachment of the Guards to be sent again into the city. Some of the rioters were seized that night, and the constables carrying them to New Prison, the weavers attempted to rescue their fellows; the trained bands fired at them with powder, which had no other effect than to heighten their insolence; whereupon one of the trained bands fired ball and wounded three persons, some very dangerously. The next day four of the rioters were committed to Newgate for a riot, and on Sunday

night two more were committed to the same prison for felony in tearing the gown off the back of one Mrs. Beckett.

Seventeen years later some very serious disturbances arose in consequence of the contractors for the building of Shoreditch Church, pressed for time, and pushed for money, announcing their intention of employing any Irish labourers who would be willing to work for a lower wage than that demanded by English workmen. What the consequence was may easily be gleaned from the subjoined paragraph .—

On Monday, some labourers, part of whom were English and part Irish, met at a cook's shop in Holywell Street, Shoreditch, and having words on the occasion of the latter doing labouring work cheaper than the English, a quarrel arose in which the landlord, who was an Irishman, taking part with his countrymen, laid a wager of six guineas that four of them would beat six Englishmen, and they were to decide it next day. These disputes drew together a large mob, and each siding as his country or opinion listed him; great disorders were then committed, and the same increasing on Tuesday evening, grew at length to such head that the mob attacked the cook's shop, broke the windows, put the landlord to flight, and in all probability would certainly have pulled down the house had not the magistrates, who were prudently assembled, prevented the further effects of their rage there. The mob then determined to extirpate the Irishmen, repaired to several other houses where they were lodged, and, coming, amongst the rest, to the Two Brewers in Brick Lane, in Spitalfields, the landlord, who was an Irishman, and some others who were in his house, put themselves on their defence, fired out at the window and unhappily shot a lad, son to Mr. Blake, a sieve-maker in the Little Minories, and wounded six or seven others. Several persons had been likewise wounded in the fray at the other houses, and the crowd being by this time assembled to some thousands in number, and in the utmost fury, much mischief might have followed but for the wisdom of the gentlemen in the commission of the peace, who appeared among the thickest, and read the proclamation for dispersing them. They likewise called out the trained bands, and procured two parties of the Foot Guards to be sent from the Tower, who marching through Spitalfields and Shoreditch, the mob retired home and everything was quiet.[1]

Here, however, the disturbances did not end. The capture of eight rioters by the train-bands did not tend in the least to mend matters, and for some days longer disturbances con-

[1] *Craftsman*, July 31, 1736.

tinued. By degrees, the train-bands succeeded in stamping the riot out.

Nearly twenty-nine years of quietude followed these riots. At length, in 1765, impelled by sheer destitution, the Spitalfields weavers grew turbulent. On May 6 in that year a mob of 5,000 strong, armed with bludgeons and pickaxes, marched to Bloomsbury Square, where resided one of the Cabinet ministers, and, having paraded their grievances, marched away, threatening to return in the event of those grievances failing to meet with speedy redress. Next day they began rioting in right real earnest, and to the end of the month kept London in such a state of general alarm that the citizens were compelled for the time being to form a military camp.

Monday night (says a writer in the issue of 'Lloyd's Evening Post' for May 22, 1765), the guards were doubled at Bedford House, and in each street leading thereto were placed six or seven of the Horse Guards, who continued till yesterday at ten with their swords drawn. A strong party of Albemarle's Dragoons took post in Tottenham Court Road, and patrols of them were sent off towards Islington and Marylebone, and the other environs on that side of the town; the Duke of Bedford's new road by Baltimore House was opened, when every hour a patrol came that way to and round Bloomsbury to see that all was well.

Between 1765 and 1767 there was a lull in rioting. In the latter year the 'culters,' as they were styled, became very riotous, breaking into houses of business, cutting the work off the looms, and dangerously wounding several who endeavoured to arrest their progress. The years 1768 and 1769 were marked by similar disturbances.

The series of arbitrary and illegal proceedings instituted by the Earl of Bute against the notorious demagogue John Wilkes, member for Aylesbury, not only by reason of the unsparing ridicule which he had directed against him, but also by his aspersions on the ministry which succeeded to that of Pitt and Temple, was the origin of the Wilkes riots, which played so important a part in the history of 1763. The month of June in the previous year witnessed the publication of the first number of the 'NorthBriton,' a journal conducted by Wilkes, and distinguished by nothing so much as extremely intemperate language.

On April 23, 1763, No. 45 of this journal was published, and was found to contain an article written by Wilkes violently attacking Lord Bute, the Scotch favourite of the Queen Dowager, who had then recently resigned the reins of government. The despotic minister, stung to the quick by this article, declared that he saw in it what he termed 'a rude attack on the Sovereign;' and this it was which furnished him with a pretext for causing its author to be arrested at his residence in Great George Street, on April 30, and committed to the Tower. A speedy application was made at the Court of Common Pleas for his *habeas corpus*. On May 3 he was tried. Three days later, his plea of privilege having been allowed, he was set at liberty. The publication of the 'North Briton' was, of course, resumed, and Wilkes lost no time in setting the Government at defiance. At the first opportunity Wilkes discussed the subject of the breach of privilege in the legislative assembly. But the House receiving a message from the King stating that the member for Aylesbury had written a paper fraught with danger and sedition, they voted, after proofs of this had been submitted to them, for the burning of No. 45 of the 'North Briton' by the common hangman. This sentence was accordingly carried into effect, but before it was, Wilkes had seized the bull by the horns and had flown to Paris. As Wilkes enjoyed great popularity, the announcement that the 'North Briton' was publicly to be burnt evoked a howl of indignation. On the day appointed, an angry mob assembled at the scene of the ceremony (which was the Royal Exchange) and vented their spleen by pelting the Sheriff, hangman, and constables with stones and other missiles, by hissing and groaning, and by extinguishing the fire as fast as the terrified hangman attempted to light it. As a last resource, the functionary endeavoured to set the paper alight with a link. But this ended in total failure, the flame was extinguished, and one of the rioters, rushing forward, seized the paper and thrust it into his pocket. The Sheriff, angry and bleeding, drove off as fast as he could, followed by the hangman and the constables with broken staves, amid the jeers of the triumphant crowd. Two attempts were made to burn the 'North Briton' on Dec. 6, at Temple Bar and Charing Cross,

and both ended with results similar to those which have already been indicated.

For the next five years John Wilkes sojourned on French soil. At last, growing weary of exile, and burning to be what he once was, the idol of the populace, he resolved to return, and by March 1768 he had found his way into London, where, as a preliminary, he addressed a letter of submission to the King. Receiving no response to this, the demagogue announced his intention of contesting the City of London on the 16th of the same month. Five years of absence had not by any means cooled the love which the populace bore to John Wilkes, although he was defeated in the contest. The reception he met with no doubt encouraged him to stand for the county of Middlesex. On the 26th he was returned by an overwhelming majority, but the fly in the ointment was supplied by the Government, which, having marked him for its own, caused the popular idol to be arrested on a *capias alligatum*, and consigned to the King's Bench prison. A few days later sentence of outlawry was pronounced against him. On the two previous verdicts he was to be incarcerated for twenty-two months, to pay two fines of five hundred pounds each, and to find security for his good behaviour for seven years, himself in one thousand pounds, and two sureties in five hundred pounds each. It is necessary to recite these unconstitutional proceedings in order that the terrible riots which ensued may be understood. Bail having been refused, Wilkes was despatched under the custody of the marshal to the King's Bench prison in a hackney coach, which, while lumbering along over Westminster Bridge, arrested the attention of the rabble, by whom it was promptly arrested. 'Wilkes and Liberty!' they shouted, proceeding at the same time to unharness the horses, and to drag the demagogue back in the opposite direction to that in which he was proceeding. With joyful exultation Wilkes was conducted to a public-house in Spitalfields, from which he was not permitted by his adorers to emerge until nearly twelve o'clock at night. When, however, he did succeed in tearing himself away, he proceeded straightway to the King's Bench prison, and there surrendered himself to the marshal.

At an early hour on the following day a vast mob assembled outside the King's Bench prison, bent upon effecting the rescue of the member for Middlesex; but the presence of the soldiers who had been stationed there somewhat daunted them. Monday, May 9, dawned—the day preceding that appointed for the opening of Parliament. The mob had increased, and eight of its ringleaders were arrested. The following day, a mob, twice as numerous as that which had yet appeared, assembled outside the gates of Wilkes's prison, fully expecting that he would be released in order to discharge his parliamentary duties, but they were destined to be disappointed, as the gates remained closed. All attempts at pacifying the populace were found useless, and as the reading of the Riot Act by the Surrey magistrates elicited nothing but derision, the soldiers were called upon to fire. They did so, and at the first volley half a dozen of the rioters dropped lifeless to the ground, while about twice as many received serious wounds. Seeing that the game was up, the mob commenced to fly in all directions, hotly pursued by the soldiery.

These ill-advised proceedings, as might be expected, contributed only to the glorification of John Wilkes. 'The Massacre of St. George's Fields,' as the populace persistently termed it, coupled with other of its proceedings, greatly intensified their hatred of the Government. If proof were needed as to the estimation in which Wilkes was now held, the newspapers of the day would furnish enough and to spare. Some of the most noteworthy, culled from various sources, are here appended :—

On Saturday last an honest sailor presented Mr. Wilkes on his return to the King's Bench prison with a fine large salmon weighing 30 lbs.—We are well informed that on Sunday last there were not fewer than 200 coaches that brought visitors to the King's Bench Prison.—On Saturday evening an ordinary gold watch was raffled for at a public-house near Ludgate Hill, by *forty-five* persons at three shillings and ninepence (forty-five pence each), and was won by a man aged forty-five, by casting the number forty-five.—On Sunday last the new-born sons of David Sinclair and James Donaldson (both Scotchmen) were respectively baptized at the lodgings of Sinclair, in Earl Street, Seven Dials, by the names of John Wilkes.—There were great illuminations and rejoicings in the

King's Bench prison on account of Mr. Wilkes having obtained the reversal of his outlawry.

By such paragraphs as these the newspaper press continued for long to feed the popular mind in favour of the 'Friend to Liberty.' But popularity, like everything else, is of a transient nature, and long before his death, which occurred in 1797, John Wilkes, so far from being a popular idol, was very little better than a name.

But perhaps the most awful riots which ever broke out in the capital were those which sully its annals for the year 1780—disturbances 'to which,' as Lord Stanhope has justly observed, 'the most rank intolerance gave origin, and Lord George Gordon a name.' The true cause of these outrageous disturbances, proving the truth of Aristotle's remark that the rule of a mob is the worst of tyrannies, is to be found in the horror and fury which an Act of Parliament that was passed in 1778, for the relief of the Roman Catholic subjects of the realm from the civil penalties and disabilities under which they had laboured ever since the reign of William III., had excited in many ultra-Protestant minds. Sir George Savile had introduced that bill into Parliament, and almost concurrently a Protestant association was formed and pledged to its opposition. The association, like many others, sprang from very small beginnings. It comprised at first a few rabid Protestant clergy and laity of the Anglican Church, who held their meetings in Coachmakers' Hall, Foster Lane, Cheapside. To make the happiness of the association entire, a young Scottish fanatical nobleman, Lord George Gordon (third son of William, Duke of Gordon), who had just entered his twenty-ninth year, graciously acceded to its request on November 12, 1779, that he would become its honorary president. It had been decided that at the earliest possible opportunity a petition should be presented to Parliament, and at meetings of the association held in the months of April and May 1780 the presentation of this petition was warmly discussed. In the end it was unanimously resolved in a meeting at the Coachmakers' Hall on May 29, 1780, 'That whereas no hall in London can hold 40,000 persons, this Association do meet on Friday next, in St. George's Fields, at

10 o'clock in the morning, to consider of the most prudent and respectful manner of attending their petition; which will be the same day presented to the House of Commons,' and at that hour, on the day appointed, the Protestant associationists mustered (in numbers computed by different authorities between 40,000 and 86,000 men) in St. George's Fields, an extensive tract of waste land situated on the Surrey side of the river. Well-authenticated tradition asserts that they assembled in and about the identical spot whereon the altar of the Roman Catholic cathedral, dedicated to St. George, now stands. Thence at about twelve o'clock, in four divisions, heralded by banners and music, these lusty Protestants marched to Westminster, eight abreast, wearing blue cockades in their hats, singing hymns, and bearing the huge petition. The route that they took was by Blackfriars Bridge and Charing Cross. Very orderly they continued until their ranks were augmented by the rabble, when what had previously been 'a glorious and most affecting spectacle,' changed to a scene exactly the reverse. The Houses of Parliament were reached at about half-past two, and as soon as the associationists had collected themselves, they unanimously gave vent to a great shout, which can be compared only to that which the Mosaic records inform us the Israelites gave utterance when the priests compassed the city of Jericho preparatory to its fall. The historian of the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' at that time a member of the House of Commons, writing on June 27 to his wife, who was then sojourning in Bath, stated that the appearance of the Protestant associationists before its walls was 'as if forty thousand Puritans of the days of Cromwell had started from their graves.'[1] For a while the behaviour of this vast concourse of people was irreproachable, but as the members began to arrive, it commenced to grow turbulent. A writer who was an eye-witness records that

some of the members of the House of Commons they obliged to swear to vote for the repeal of the act in question, others they compelled to wear blue cockades, and cry out with the Primate, 'No Popery!' It happened, perhaps rather by accident than design,

[1] *Memoirs*, ed. Lord Sheffield, ii. p. 213.

that the Lords met with worse treatment than the Commons. They stopped the venerable old Lord Bathurst in his carriage, pulled him a hundred different ways in getting him out, kicked his legs, and it was with difficulty he got into the House. Lord Mansfield was daringly abused, and had mud thrown in his face. Lord Stormont was saved only by the resolution of his friends, his carriage was broken, and his person assaulted. The Duke of Northumberland might be said to fare still worse, as to insult was added the loss of his watch. The Bishop of Lichfield escaped with his gown in tatters; and the Bishop of Lincoln with life by a miracle. His carriage was accidentally stopped by the crowd, which his lordship too hastily resenting, a ruffian pulled him out and throttled him till the blood came out of his mouth; and happy for his lordship he got refuge in a gentleman's house, whence he escaped at the top, while thirty of the ruffians were searching for him below. The Bishop of Rochester, whom the populace at first took for the Archbishop of York, was very severely handled by them. He was asked, 'if he had not once been schoolmaster at Westminster;' which his lordship answering in the negative a person in the crowd declared that they were wrong, for that Dr. Markham was a taller man; but that if they had been right the bishop should have been marked with a cross deeply indented on his forehead. The Earl of Hillsborough owed his safety to his friend Lord Townshend, who accompanied him in his chariot, and both got into the House with the loss of their bags. Lord Ashburnham was personally assaulted and roughly handled, as were the Lords St. John and Dudley. Lord Trentham had his *vis-à-vis* much shattered.

It was late in the day before Lord George Gordon was able to introduce the petition, which, according to his own account, had received one hundred and twenty thousand signatures. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alderman Bull, who moved that it should there and then receive the consideration of the House. Contrary to all precedent, Lord George Gordon succeeded in dividing the House, with the result that six voted 'Aye,' and one hundred and ninety-two 'No.' The adjournment of the House followed.[1]

Meanwhile it got towards evening. The mob showed no inclination to disperse. The brandy and other liquors which its ringleaders had imbibed in no small quantity tended only to

[1] Many of the facts which have been narrated and many which follow are taken from the second edition of *A Plain and Succinct Narrative of the late Riots and Disturbances*, put forth in 1780 as the compilation of 'William Vincent, of Gray's Inn;' but which was in reality the work of Thomas Holcroft, the celebrated dramatist and novelist.

inflame their minds. Eventually the rioters divided into two mighty divisions, one of which proceeded in the direction of the Sardinian Ambassador's chapel, situated in Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, while the other started for the residence of the Bavarian Ambassador, Count Haslung, which was situated in Warwick Street, Golden Square. Shortly after ten o'clock the first of these divisions arrived at the Sardinian Ambassador's chapel, which it at once proceeded to demolish. Effecting an entry, the rioters dragged down the altar, the crucifixes, and statues, and made a bonfire of the whole in the street. As the flames darted forth, they were fed with the sacerdotal vestments, the ornaments, the costly altarpiece, and even with the organ. About an hour later, one hundred of the Somerset House Guards appeared upon the scene, apprehended thirteen of the rioters, and put the rest to flight. The following day, which was Saturday, passed away on the whole quietly. On Sunday, which was the anniversary of the king's birthday, matters wore a very gloomy aspect, which became still more gloomy when it was known that the infuriated rabble had ransacked and demolished a Roman Catholic chapel in Ropemaker's Alley, Little Moorfields. Affairs were no better on the Monday. At an early hour the rioters assembled in Ropemaker's Alley, and destroyed three priests' houses and a school. Several Roman Catholic places of worship shared a similar fate during the course of the same day. Despite a reward of 500*l.*, which had been offered by the Government for the apprehension of those concerned in the destruction of the Sardinian and Bavarian chapels, the riot assumed by degrees the character of a rebellion.

On Tuesday (says a contemporary writer in the 'Gentleman's Magazine'), the day appointed to take the Protestant petition into further consideration by Parliament, the multitude that assembled about the Parliament House was no less numerous than that of the preceding Friday. They did not, as before, regularly assemble in St. George's Fields, but came in small parties from different places. At first they seemed orderly, but apparently resolute. In the course of the afternoon more parties arrived, and they began by degrees to become tumultuous. Lord Sandwich, however, was the only person who suffered violence; he was instantly rescued by Colonel Smith, who, with a party of horse, escorted him back to the Admiralty,

whence he wrote to Lord Mansfield stating his case. On reading his letter to the House of Peers, Lord Ravensworth expressed his indignation that the House should still be in a position so truly mortifying, that their lordships could not, without personal danger, take their seats in that House. He was followed by Lord Denbigh, who complained of the insults his lordship had himself suffered, and objected to the sitting of the House under such circumstances. In this he was supported by Lord Radnor. The Earl of Hillsborough begged of the noble lords to point out another mode of proceeding for their lordships' persons than that taken by his Majesty's ministers; and Lord Bathurst said that every power of the constitution had been employed, and would continue to be employed, to secure the freedom of their deliberations; but notwithstanding these assurances, the House soon broke up and adjourned till Thursday.

While the House had been sitting the rioters had made an attempt upon Lord North's residence in Downing Street, which had resulted in failure. Soon after the members had risen, Lord George Gordon hastened to the corner of Bridge Street, and harangued the mob, telling them that the petition would receive the consideration of the House in due course, and exhorting them to disperse as peaceably and orderly as they could. The rioters testified their assent by unharnessing the horses of his lordship's carriage, and dragging him and Sir Philip Jennings Clerke, by whom he was accompanied, to the residence of Alderman Bull. Those that were not thus employed were hurried along by the rest.

You can have no conception (wrote Dr. Burney to his friend the Rev. Thomas Twining, Rector of St. Mary, Colchester, on Sunday, May 11) of the particular consternation, distress, and danger into which the inhabitants of Newton House (Dr. Burney's residence) have been involved by the fury of the miscreants, who on Monday night assaulted the house of Sir George Savile in Leicester Fields, and on Tuesday that of Justice Hyde in our very street; making bonfires of their furniture, and in this last not leaving a floor, a shutter, door, window-frame, or anything which could feed six or seven fires in the street at first, and afterwards one great fire at the top of it in Leicester Fields, from six in the evening till two o'clock the next morning; at the same time obliging all the inhabitants to illuminate for this victory over all law and government.[1]

A party of Guards was headed by Justice Hyde, who was rewarded for this display of activity by having his residence,

[1] *Twining Correspondence*, p. 80.

which was near Leicester Fields, attacked in the evening, and pillaged of all the furniture it contained, which was burnt before his very door.

These memorable riots were destined to reach their culminating point in a furious attack upon the then recently erected Newgate Prison, which occurred on June 6, 1780. Between the hours of 6 and 7 o'clock on the evening of that day, a well-organised mob, headed by thirty daring spirits, bent upon the destruction of the prison, armed with iron crowbars, mattocks, and chisels, might have been seen pouring down Holborn, followed by the scum of the population, bearing bludgeons, the spokes of cart-wheels, and every other weapon they could lay their hands upon. Arriving before Newgate the mob, without any palaver, divided into three companies, the first of which proceeded to burst in the door of the house tenanted by Akerman, one of the keepers ; the second attacked the debtors' door, and the third the felons' door. It is almost needless to say that their efforts to batter them were successful. The rioters, enraged beyond bounds, poured into the prison, and soon made themselves masters of it. The mob having set the house of Akerman on fire, the flames soon spread to the prison itself, and defied the efforts of the turnkeys, aided by one hundred constables, to extinguish it. And Newgate and its immediate vicinity, for the time being, was thus rendered a perfect pandemonium. George Crabbe, the poet, at that time friendless and alone in the metropolis, having relinquished the profession of a country apothecary to court the Muses, was a chance beholder of the fall of Newgate. He relates that he beheld the prisoners emerging from their gloomy cells loaded with heavy irons, dumbfounded at the scene. As they came out the mob carried them off in triumph, just as they were, on horseback. Crabbe, during his sojourn in the metropolis, rented an apartment at a hairdresser's near the Exchange, and it was while returning to it after a solitary ramble through the London streets, that he found himself on Ludgate Hill, just as the rioters had accomplished their work of destruction. The scene which met his gaze he faithfully described for the information of his beloved Myra in the pages

of his journal, which was long afterwards laid open for the inspection of the reading world :—

The new prison (wrote the youthful bard, under date of June 8, 1780), was a very large, strong, and beautiful building, having two wings, besides Mr. Akerman's house and strong intermediate works, and other adjuncts. How he escaped, or where he is gone, I know not; but just at the time I speak of they set fire to his house, broke in, and threw every piece of furniture they could find into the street, firing them also in an instant. The engines came, but were only suffered to preserve the private houses near the prison. As I was standing near the spot there approached another body of men—I suppose five hundred—and Lord George Gordon, in a coach drawn by the mob towards Alderman Bull's, bowing as he passed along. He is a lively looking young man in appearance, and nothing more, though just now the reigning hero. By eight o'clock Akerman's house was in flames. I went close to it, and never saw anything so dreadful. The prison was, as I said, a remarkably strong building, but, determined to force it, they broke the gates with crows and other instruments, and climbed up the outside of the cell part, which joins the two great wings of the building where the felons were confined; and I stood where I plainly saw their operations. They broke the roof, tore away the rafters, and having got ladders they descended. Not Orpheus himself had more courage or better luck. Flames all around them, and a body of soldiers expected, they defied and laughed at all opposition. The prisoners escaped. I stood and saw about twelve women and eight men ascend from their confinement to the open air, and they were conducted through the streets in their chains. Three of these were to be hanged on Friday. You have no conception of the frenzy of the multitude. This being done, and Akerman's house now a mere shell of brickwork, they kept a store of flame there for other purposes. It became red-hot, and the doors and windows appeared like the entrances to so many volcanoes. With some difficulty they then fired the debtors' prison, broke the doors, and they too all made their escape. Tired of the scene, I went home, and returned again at eleven o'clock at night. I met large bodies of horse and foot soldiers coming to guard the Bank, and some houses of Roman Catholics near it. Newgate at the time was open to all; anyone might get in, and what was never the case before, anyone might get out. I did both, for the people now were chiefly lookers on. The mischief was done, and the doers of it gone to another part of the town.[1]

The flames of Newgate Prison shed a ruddy glow upon the windows of Dr. Johnson's residence in Bolt Court, Fleet Street.

On Wednesday (wrote the sage to his friend Mrs. Thrale), I walked with Dr. Scott to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins,

[1] Crabbe's *Journals and Letters*, ed. by his son, i. pp. 82-84.

with the fire yet glowing. As I went by, the Protestants were plundering the Sessions House at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred, but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place. On Wednesday they broke open the Fleet, and the King's Bench, and the Marshalsea, and Wood Street Compter, and Clerkenwell Bridewell, and released all the prisoners. At night they set fire to the Fleet, and to the King's Bench, and I know not how many other places; and one might see the glare of conflagration fill the sky from many parts. The sight was dreadful. Some people were threatened; Mr. Strahan advised me to take care of myself. Such a time of terror you have been happy in not seeing.[1]

Not satisfied with wreaking their vengeance upon Newgate, the mob had swept on. One gang selected the Catholic residents in Devonshire Street, Red Lion Square; another marched to the residence of Justice Cox in Great Queen Street, which they quickly destroyed; a third succeeded in bursting the doors of the New Prison at Clerkenwell, and in setting all the prisoners at liberty; a fourth occupied itself in destroying the effects, writings, &c. belonging to Sir John Fielding; while a fifth desperate gang proceeded to Earl Mansfield's town house in Bloomsbury Square, where they broke down the door, smashed the windows, entered the apartments and flung all the costly furniture out of window to the howling rioters who stood below, and by whom it was promptly committed to the flames of a fire which they had kindled amid shouts of fiendish delight. A most valuable collection of pictures, and some of the scarcest manuscripts supposed to be in the possession of any private person in the world, together with all his lordship's notes on important legal cases and the constitution of England, fell a sacrifice to the flames. Lord and Lady Mansfield fortunately contrived to escape through a back door a few minutes before the rioters broke in and took possession of the house. The military were sent for, and of course arrived too late, but the menacing attitude which the mob adopted compelled them to fire in their own defence, with the result that six men and a woman lost their lives, and several were sorely wounded. From Bloomsbury it had been the intention of the rioters to march to Lord

[1] Croker's *Boswell*, p. 648.

Mansfield's country seat at Caen Wood, Hampstead, which intention they would most certainly have carried out, had not a troop of horse soldiers been sent thither for the protection of the house.

Of the events which transpired on the following day, 'Black Wednesday,' as Horace Walpole called it, it is simply impossible to convey any adequate conception. The town was now in the possession of the mob. Business was entirely suspended. The shops were shut, and bits of blue silk, which did duty as flags, hung out of the windows of most private houses, the occupants of which had, in most cases, chalked on the doors and window-shutters the words of the popular cry 'No Popery,' in hopes of mitigating the violence of the insurgents. The day proved to be the most terrible of all. The arms in the Artillery Ground were seized by the rabble, which now fully believed itself to be in a position to hold its own against the soldiers who had been stationed in all important quarters of the town. The governors of the different prisons had received intimations of the hour at which they might expect their gates to be attacked. Nor were they disappointed. Simultaneously, almost, at the hour of seven in the evening, the Fleet and the King's Bench Prisons, the Borough Clink, and the Surrey Bridewell were besieged by a howling mob, attacked, and the prisoners in them assisted to escape. In gratitude they joined the rioters

Let those who were not spectators (wrote an eye-witness), judge what the inhabitants felt when they beheld at the same instant the flames ascending and rolling in vast and voluminous clouds from the King's Bench and Fleet Prisons, from New Bridewell, from the toll-gates on Blackfriars Bridge, from houses in every quarter of the town, and particularly from the bottom and middle of Holborn, where the conflagration was horrible beyond description. The houses that were first set on fire at this last mentioned place both belonged to Mr. Langdale, an eminent distiller, and contained immense quantities of spirituous liquors. It is easy to conceive what fury these would add to the flames. Men, women, and children were running up and down with beds, glasses, bundles, or whatever they wished most to preserve. In streets where there were no fires numbers were removing their goods and effects at midnight. The tremendous roar of the insatiate and innumerable fiends who were the authors of these horrible scenes was heard at one instant, and at the next the dreadful report of soldiers' muskets, as if firing in platoons,

and at various places ; in short, everything which could impress the mind with ideas of universal anarchy and approaching desolation seemed to be accumulating. Sleep and rest were things not thought of; the streets were swarming with people, and uproar, confusion, and terror reigned in every part.[1]

It might have been supposed that 'the ordinary police,' the so-called watchmen, and the thief-takers rendered some assistance. They did nothing of the sort. Sir Nathaniel Wraxall mentions a curious instance of the indifference which one of these functionaries displayed while the premises of Langdale the distiller in Holborn were being steadily consumed by the flames. 'While we stood by the wall of St. Andrew's churchyard,' he says, 'a watchman with his lantern in his hand, passed us, *calling the hour as if in a time of profound tranquillity.*'[2] The watchmen had about as much power to stay the angry passions of a London mob as the broom with which the immortal Mrs. Partington essayed to sweep back the raging billows of the Atlantic Ocean.

In addition to attacking the Bank of England, the rabble threatened Doctors' Commons, the Exchange, and the Pay Office. The scene in Holborn would require the pen of a ready writer to describe. There the two distilleries belonging to Langdale and eight adjoining houses were set on fire, and as the liquor ran in streams down the road, was caught up in pails by the crowds of bystanders, and drunk greedily by them. Numbers of besotted wretches, it is said, died from the effects of the non-rectified spirits which they then swallowed. In the streets men were lying upon bulks and stalls, and at the doors of empty houses, drunk to a state of insensibility. Boys and women might have been seen in the same pitiable condition, many of the latter with young children in their arms. Fashionable people must have had some courage to have visited the theatre in the Haymarket and Ranelagh Gardens. Yet, if Horace

[1] *Plain and Succinct Narrative*, pp. 32, 33. Much curious information respecting these riots may be gleaned from the memoirs of those who were living when they broke out. See, e.g. *Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27828, f. 127 ; Reynolds's *Life and Times*, i. 124 *et seq.* ; *Correspondence of First Earl of Malmesbury*, i. 461–6 ; Brasbridge's *Fruits of Experience*, pp. 186–7 ; Hannah More's *Memoirs*, i. 199–200.

[2] *Historical Memoirs*, i. 329.

Walpole may be believed, they did so, as in a letter to the Countess of Ossory, written on the very same evening, he informs her that Lord Aylesbury had been to the former, and the Duke of Gloucester and the four Ladies Waldegrave to the latter.[1]

Thursday, June 8, dawned. A regular military guard stationed itself in St. Paul's Churchyard. In the course of that day the rabble made their last stand in Fleet Street, where they furiously attacked a party of the Guards. The soldiers charged, killed twenty, wounded thirty-five, and returned to the Horse Guards with their bayonets steeped in gore. By the close of the day tranquillity had once more been restored. Meanwhile, what had become of Lord George Gordon? He had been arrested at his house in Welbeck Street, on a warrant from the Secretary of State, and thrown into the Tower. On the following Monday he was tried at Westminster Hall, and (thanks to the impassioned and eloquent defence of Lord Erskine) was on the next day acquitted; an event which was the occasion for a public thanksgiving in many of the London churches, particularly Grosvenor Chapel. His lordship's after-career did not redound much to his credit. He quitted the navy, in which he was a midshipman, in 1780, and for seven years afterwards nothing more was heard of him. In 1787 he wrote two defamatory libels, one upon the Queen of France, and the other upon the French Ambassador. To evade the clutches of the law he fled to Holland, whence he was soon sent back to England. He was tried and convicted, and was ordered to be incarcerated for the remainder of his days in Newgate, where he died of the gaol distemper in the month of November 1793. Prior to his arrest he had declared himself to be a convert to Judaism. As his remains were refused sepulture among the Jews, they were privately interred in the graveyard adjoining St. James's Chapel, in the Hampstead Road.[2] From the returns sent in to Lord Amherst, commander-in-chief, and subsequently published, it appears that in these unprecedented riots, no fewer than two hundred and

[1] H. Walpole's *Letters*, vii. 388.
[2] Jesse's *Selwyn*, iv. 120-2.

eighty-five individuals lost their lives, and no fewer than one hundred and seventy-three were wounded. This does not, of course, include numbers who were buried in the falling ruins, who drank themselves to death, or who may have died of their wounds. So ended the Gordon riots, which, as Lord Stanhope truly says, have been rendered 'memorable beyond most others from the proof which they afford how slender an ability suffices under certain circumstances to stir, if not to guide, great masses of mankind; and how the best principles and feelings, if perverted, may grow in practice equal to the worst'—and which, it may be added, speak volumes for the unprotected state of life and property in the English capital little more than one hundred and eleven years ago. For participating in these riots, fifty persons were capitally convicted, of whom twenty were executed and the rest transported for life beyond seas.

The attention of the reader has in this chapter been confined exclusively to the greater disturbances, which at various times agitated the London populace during the eighteenth century. The subject might easily be enlarged. Births, marriages, and deaths, victories, high days and holidays, all furnished opportunities for the mob to give vent to their feelings; and with some scattered notices of these ebullitions, this chapter may appropriately be concluded.

Speaking of the execution of the notorious Jack Sheppard, November 1724, a contemporary journal states that—

a bailiff in Long Acre having procured the body of John Sheppard to be brought to his house after execution with a sinister design, and thereby frustrating the preparations of his real friends for burying him in a decent manner, the same occasioned a great riot in Long Acre. The mob expressed great satisfaction when they saw him buried, though they had bruised his body in a most shameful manner at Tyburn in pulling it to and fro in endeavouring to rescue it from the surgeons. An undertaker who waited near the gallows with a hearse to have carried the body immediately to St. Sepulchre's, where a grave was already made for it, was insulted by the rabble, who broke the hearse and beat the man and his servant, the bailiff having artfully given it out that the undertaker was employed by the surgeons, which in truth was the bailiff's case.[1]

[1] Quoted by Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, i. 161. See an account of the riots at Ranelagh in *Correspondence of First Earl of Malmesbury*, i. 108–230.

Not many years later the mob very nearly tore in pieces Radcliffe, a prisoner of war, taken on board the 'Soleil,' mistaking him for the Cardinal of York. Radcliffe said he had heard people talk of the ferocity of London mobs, but had never imagined that they were so dreadfully violent.[1]

As a specimen of the manner in which an eighteenth-century London mob would conduct itself occasionally the following paragraph may be quoted from the 'Annual Register' for the year 1760 :—

April 15.—This evening, as an English sailor was walking in Mill Yard, Whitechapel, he was stabbed in the back by a Portuguese sailor, and instantly died. The murderer was pursued to Rag Fair, where the mob nailed him by his ear to the wall. Some time after he broke from thence with the loss of a part of it and ran ; but the mob were so incensed that they followed out and wounded him with knives till at last he either fell or threw himself into a puddle of water, where he died.

What follows occurred on June 4 (the anniversary of the king's birthday) in the year 1763, and the account of it is taken from the same source :—

As the people were crowding through the postern on Tower Hill to see the fireworks, the rails surrounding a spring suddenly gave way, and such a multitude fell together into the place as almost to fill it. During the consternation occasioned by the accident, a sailor had his pocket picked by a Jew, who after undergoing the usual discipline of ducking, hopped out of the water pretending to have his leg broke, and was carried off by some of his brethren. But the sailors discovering the trick, and considering it as a cheat, pursued him to Duke's Place, where at first they were beaten off by the inhabitants, but presently returning with a fresh reinforcement they attacked the place, entered three houses, threw everything they met with out of the window, broke the glasses, tore the beds, and ripped up the wainscot, leaving the house in the most ruinous condition. With the furniture, three children, sick of the small-pox, were thrown out, but happily received no damage.

Under date of May 5, 1764, the 'Annual Register' records that

The criminal condemned for returning from transportation at the sessions, and afterwards executed, addressed himself to the populace at Tyburn, and told them he could wish they would carry his body and lay it at the door of Mr. Parker, a butcher in the Minories, who,

[1] Walpole's *Letters*, ii. 89.

it seems, was the principal evidence against him; which being accordingly done, the mob behaved so riotous before the man's house, that it was no easy matter to disperse them.

At the Old Bailey sessions on May 5, 1764, four chairmen were tried 'for forcibly breaking into the Morocco Ambassador's house with a large mob at their heels, and there violently attacking the Ambassador himself, on pretence that he kept one of their wives from her husband.' Again, in the pages of the same record, it is stated that

on August 19, 1763, a terrible storm made such an impression on the ignorant populace assembled to see a criminal executed on Kennington Common, that the sheriff was obliged to apply to the Secretary of State for a militia force to prevent a rescue, and it was near eight in the evening before he suffered.

Secular holidays, such as January 30, May 29, and November 5, rarely passed by without a riot. Nor did such times as news was brought of British victories on land and sea, and whenever other important events became known. Riots on these occasions in the capital generally originated in the deliberate refusal or neglect of householders or shopkeepers to illuminate their establishments in a manner worthy of the great event. The following account, transcribed from the 'Annual Register' for the year 1759, will convey some idea of the punishment which the rabble inflicted upon these unfortunate delinquents :—

June 2.—The populace assaulted the house of an eminent woollen draper in Cornhill, one of the people called Quakers. They pulled up the pavement and split the window-shutters of his shop with large stones. The smaller pebbles were flung up as high as the third storey, the windows of which are much damaged; in the second not so much as one pane of glass has escaped. The windows of the first storey were not touched, being fenced by strong shutters on the outside. The reason for the mob's resentment was his not illuminating his house like the rest of his neighbours.

There were other times, as, for instance, the ninth of November, Lord Mayor's Day, when the streets of the capital echoed to the rejoicing of an imposing pageant and ceremonial of civil show and military display. Such an event was generally characterised by a popular tumult.

Another form in which popular satisfaction was wont to display itself on important occasions was that of kindling bonfires in all the principal London thoroughfares. It is related by Lord Campbell, in his 'Lives of the Chief Justices,' that a few hours after the trial of William Owen for libel, Sir Dudley Ryder, who, as attorney-general, had been ordered to institute the prosecution against him by a vote of the House of Commons, ventured to return from the Guildhall to his house in Chancery Lane. To his dismay he beheld an enormous bonfire blazing in Fleet Street, surrounded by a turbulent mob, which, before it would permit his coach to pass, compelled him to distribute money among them in order that they might drink to the health of the jury. Failing to recognise in Sir Dudley the counsel for the Crown, they threw to him, in return for his benefaction, a copy of a song supposed to have been sung by the foreman and a chorus of jurymen, but in reality the composition of an Irish porter.

It was on June 12, 1779, that tidings reached the capital from Portsmouth of the honourable acquittal by the court-martial of Admiral Keppel. The mob became frantic with excitement and compelled every householder 'to put up lights.' The principal streets of London and Westminster were illuminated with lamps and candles, the church bells chimed forth merry peals, and guns boomed at intervals. The rabble, who had all along been violent in their denunciations of the admiral's accusers, manifested their exultation by wreaking their vengeance upon Sir Hugh Palliser's residence in Pall Mall, where, after having broken all the windows, they proceeded to burst open the doors, and effecting an entrance, demolished the best part of the furniture, and flung the remainder into the street, where it was given to the flames of a bonfire. Marching to the Admiralty, they continued their work of destruction by taking off the gates from their hinges, and passing through Downing Street, smashed the windows of Lord North's mansion.[1] In the evening the mob carried about effigies of Sir Hugh Palliser suspended by the neck, and finally burnt them upon Tower Hill. Great acclamations attended the presenta-

[1] *Diary and Letters of Governor Hutchinson*, ii. 242–3.

tion of the freedom of the city of London to Admiral Keppel on February 20, but there was less rioting than before.

It must not be supposed that the mob in these particular riots was composed of none but the lower orders of the London population. Hear the remarkable words of Fox's biographer:—

> It happened at three in the morning that Charles Fox, Lord Derby, and his brother, Major Stanley, and two or three more young men of quality, having been drinking at Almack's, suddenly thought of making a tour of the streets, and were joined by the Duke of Ancaster, who was very drunk, and what showed it was no premeditated scheme, the latter was a courtier, and had actually been breaking windows. Finding the mob before Palliser's house, some of the young lords said, 'Why don't you break Lord G. Germaine's windows?' The populace had been so little tutored that they asked who he was, and being encouraged, broke his windows. The mischief pleasing the juvenile leaders, they marched to the Admiralty, forced the gates, and demolished Palliser's and Lord Lisburne's windows.[1]

Lord John Russell, who gives this account of those lawless days, adds in a footnote that it was always said that Thomas Grenville participated in the riot at the Admiralty, and this, when the prevailing amusements of young men of rank in that age are taken into consideration, may very likely have been the case.

[1] *Memorials and Corr. of Fox*, ed. by Lord J. Russell, i. 224.

# CHAPTER XVII.

## THE LIFE OF THE PROVINCES.

Isolation of provincial society—Boorish manners of the peasantry—The squire—The country parson as he was—The rural Sunday—Furniture of country houses—Domestic manners—Food—Toasting—Recreations—The turf—Sports of the lower orders—State of provincial towns—Archaic customs—Bury Fair—Marriage and funeral ceremonies—Obsolete social condition of their inhabitants—Local punishments—The tumbril, cucking-stool, and 'Drunkard's Cloak'—The brank, or 'Gossip's Bridle'—The whipping post—A country clergyman's book of accounts—Defoe's tour through England—Arthur Young's peregrinations.

HITHERTO our attention has been mainly confined to but one aspect of the social life of England in the eighteenth century, namely, that of the capital. There is, however, another side which awaits a brief consideration—that of provincial society during the same period—and accordingly in this chapter we shall examine that branch of the subject, although necessarily somewhat at random, since to trace all the associations which are connected with it would occupy a volume instead of a single chapter.

If it were possible for the reader to retrace his footsteps into 'the dark backward and abysm of time,' and to find himself in some one or other of the provincial towns or villages of the last century, few things would strike him more forcibly than their complete isolation from what is commonly called the outer world. For such a state of complete isolation it is not difficult to account. Some ten or a dozen miles of miry and well nigh impassable road, or a river over which nobody had deemed it worth while to throw even a wooden bridge, would then have sufficed, as it often did, to impose almost as much restriction upon frequent intercourse as the Atlantic Ocean does between us

and our American brethren at the present time. There were many districts which rarely or never received visitants from the outer world at all, and in which the sudden appearance of a traveller aroused as much curiosity among the natives as that of an Englishman nowadays excites among the rude uncultivated peasantry who inhabit the north-west coast of Ireland. Indeed it too often happened that Hodge's prejudices against intruders assumed a most unpleasantly active form. William Hutton, an eminent Birmingham bookseller of the last century, has left on record a short narrative of a visit which he paid in company with a friend to the village of Market Bosworth in Leicestershire, some time during the year 1770, in order to view the scene of the memorable battle which had been fought in its vicinity more than two centuries and a half before. In that narrative he states that the villagers set their dogs at them in the streets, merely because they were strangers. Nor were they surprised at such treatment. 'Surrounded with impassable roads,' he wrote, 'no intercourse with man to humanise the mind, nor commerce to smooth their rugged manners, they continue the boors of nature.'[1] The testimony of John Wesley, who, in his time, must have penetrated almost every district of the kingdom, is upon this point equally apposite. In describing his journey from Manchester to Huddersfield, he observes—'The people ran and shouted after the carriage, and I believe they are the wildest folk in England.' Further proof of the brutality which still reigned among the lower orders in provincial districts is supplied in the fact that so late as the closing years of the eighteenth century there existed, at Bolton in Lancashire, a savage custom of maltreating strangers called 'trotting,' in which they were subjected to downright brutal usage. In their more serious quarrels it was not uncommon to bite off ears and noses; and in some instances to kick each other to death with the force of their clogs.[2] When John Wesley visited Cornwall in 1776, he found 'wrecking' a practice which had been made a capital offence by Henry Pelham, as rife then as it had ever been.

Nine-tenths of the provincial denizens, to the close of the

[1] *History of Bosworth Field.*
[2] Gardiner, *Music and Friends*, i. 586.

eighteenth century, possessed knowledge of scarcely anybody or anything outside their own very limited sphere. Now and then, perhaps, some London pedlar or packman hawking his wares in a sequestered neighbourhood would favour his customers with a few items of information respecting men and what they were doing amidst the varied scenes, the bustle and the stir of the great Babel which he had left behind him ; or it would not unfrequently happen that a stained and tattered number of a London or country newspaper found its way from the house of some neighbouring gentleman into the kitchen of the village inn, where its slender contents were read and re-read by someone possessed of a good pair of lungs to a crowd of gaping clodhoppers whom it furnished with food for reflection, like the Shunamite widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil, for the space of half a year. But beyond this the rustic population in the last century seldom or never advanced.

In considering the main factors in provincial society at that time, we pause first to notice the character of the small squire. Nothing can be more erroneous than the supposition that the squires of eighteenth-century England bore any resemblance to their modern counterparts, that they were in effect the prototypes of Sir Roger de Coverley with whom Addison has made us so familiar, or of Sir William Thornton whom the reader of Goldsmith can never forget. Divest that immortal creation of Fielding's brain, Squire Western, of the grosser features in his character, and the portrait will stand very well for a representative of this large and influential class for, at least, the first sixty years of the eighteenth century.

Adopting the language of a writer in the 'Connoisseur,' it may be said without any exaggeration that the majority of the squires were as mere vegetables which grew up and rotted on the same spot of ground ; except a few, perhaps, that were transplanted into Parliament. Their whole life was hurried away in scampering after foxes, leaping five-bar gates, trampling upon the farmers' corn, and swilling October. The career of one was the career of a hundred. First he dawdled away a couple of years at one of the universities, which he generally left without taking a degree, and with but little addition to his previous

scanty stores of knowledge beyond perhaps a few recipes for brewing punch and an intimate acquaintance with the deep mysteries of ombre, lansquenet, and loo. Entering into possession of his estate, he hunted the fox five days in each week, and generally appeared in public habited in a plain drab or plush coat ornamented with large silver buttons, breeches, a jockey cap and top-boots. Usually on one day in each week he sat down to dinner at an inn in the nearest market town with the attorneys and justices ; and on other days, in the brief intervals of leisure which the chase afforded him, he perused the county newspaper or a news-letter ; settled the disputes and wrangling between the officers of the parish at the vestry meeting, after which he repaired to the nearest alehouse, where he contrived to get as drunk as possible within a very short space of time. As a general rule he imbibed nothing stronger than ale, but on such festive occasions as the commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot, Christmas Day, Twelfth Night, and the like, he would brew a bowl of strong brandy punch, and garnish it with toast and nutmeg. Whenever he took his walks abroad, a couple of greyhounds and a pointer invariably followed at his heels, and whenever he arrived at the house of a friend or a neighbour, he was wont to announce that interesting fact by a crack of his whip or a loud 'halloo !' On the seventh day he would bend his steps in the direction of the parish church, enter the family pew, and indulge in a nap during the best part of the service. His travels, as a rule, rarely exceeded the distance of the county town, and then only for the purpose of attending the assizes, the sessions, or the election. The prospect of a journey to the capital he regarded with as much awe as his successors would now regard a voyage to the north pole, and such a journey was generally undertaken much in the manner of the immortal Wronghead family.

The residence of the squire was fashioned either of plaster striped with timber, or of red brick with large bow windows, having a porch furnished with seats. In the rear of the premises was a stable-yard, where reposed in solemn state a rusty, battered-looking box, designated by courtesy 'the

family coach.' The garden was planted with hollyhocks, rose-bushes, cabbages, currant-trees; and close by the gate a horse-block was usually placed for the convenience of those who mounted horses. The walls of the hall would be ornamented with huge flitches of bacon, and the mantelpieces with guns and fishing-rods of various shapes and sizes, besides a plentiful supply of rusty broadswords, partisans, and daggers which had been borne by ancestors of the family in time of war. Powder and stag-horns would occupy vacant spaces on the walls, whereon, too, might be seen posted, perhaps, a stained and dog-eared almanack more than two years old, and a set of the Golden Rules of Charles I., of which (as they are curious, and are now rarely to be seen) a copy shall be appended:—'Prophane no divine ordinances. Touch no state matters. Urge no health. Pick no quarrels. Maintain no ill opinions. Encourage no vice. Repeat no grievances. Make no comparisons. Keep no bad company. Make no long meals. Lay no wagers. These rules observed, will obtain thy peace and everlasting gain.'

In the window-seat would have been found the literature of the household. 'Baker's Chronicle,' Fox's 'Book of Martyrs,' 'Glanvil on Apparitions,' the 'Complete Justice,' and one or two treatises bearing on the subject of farriery. In the corner, by the fireside, stood a large wooden, two-armed chair, and a couple of seats in the chimney-corner. The best parlour, which was never opened, save on very special occasions, was furnished with Turkey worked chairs, and hung around with paintings of the ancestors of the family—those of the sterner sex figuring as shepherds holding crooks, &c. in their hands, in full dress and full-bottomed perukes. The women were depicted in the ridiculous guise of shepherdesses habited in high heads and flowing head-dresses.

The squire's lady and daughters passed their time chiefly in the preparation of different kinds of cordial waters, in the curing of marigolds, in the making of pastry, cherry and raspberry brandy, and in the concoction of salves, electuaries, juleps, and purges for the use of their poor neighbours according to the excellent recipes contained in Mrs. Glasse's Cookery

Book, a work which no housewife suffered herself to be without. The chief companion of the squire was a Levite—that is to say, a clerk in holy orders—who for the modest sum of 10*l.* per annum and his board united in his person the two offices of domestic chaplain and factotum, who, in addition to digging for an hour or two daily in the garden or the orchard, was required to bring the hope of the family past the wearisome bitterness of his learning, to check the rent book and the miller's score, to shoe the horses, to say grace at meals, and to withdraw as soon as the cheese and tarts made their appearance upon the table.

Next in importance to the squire in a country village ranked the parson, who at that period too often was a pluralist, passing in that capacity no inconsiderable portion of the ecclesiastical year either in the capital, at Bath, or Tunbridge Wells. If resident he was detestably slothful and lethargic in the discharge of his pastoral duties. Fielding's Parson Trulliber, divested of his grosser features, is passable for many a country parson in the Georgian era. The reverend gentleman on weekdays might have been seen filling the dung-cart in dry weather, and pulling hemp in wet, or planted on a pannier with a pair of geese or turkeys bobbing out their heads from beneath his canonicals. Doubtless the fact that so many of the rural clergy in the last century were never over rich in this world's goods may account in great measure for the low estimation in which they were undoubtedly held. When it is remembered that they were forced to eke out a subsistence upon miserable pittances, often far lower than the scanty wage earned by an agricultural labourer, we cease to wonder how it came about that the poor spiritual shepherds of Arcadia were characterised by so much servility and coarseness, and how instead of being able to take their position as gentlemen, and to associate with gentlemen, they were so often to be found sitting by the fireside in the kitchen of the village alehouse with a bottle of ale and a pipe.[1]

And now as to the life led by the humble cottagers and

[1] For some evidence of this consult the Rev. Richard Warner's *Literary Recollections*, i. 302.

labourers during that period. Are there any reasons for believing that their existence was more enjoyable under the Georges than it is under Queen Victoria? There are none. Compared with that of the eighteenth century, the present lot of the agricultural labourer may be said to have been cast in pleasant places. Consider, briefly, the state of the peasantry. Education being in such a deplorably retrograde condition, they were, of course, quite unequal to the task of either instructing or diverting their minds by reading. All those sports, such as the quintain, the wakes, and the Whitsun ales, which had lent such charms to English rural life of the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries, were now in great part extinct, or nearly so, thanks to the prejudices of Puritanism. The various field sports and pastimes of the present day were as yet in their infancy, and we are, therefore, driven to the conclusion that poor Hodge in 'the lovely bowers of innocence and ease' of eighteenth-century England, was too often compelled to find his sole recreation for mind and body, like the immortal knife-grinder of the 'Anti-Jacobin,' in 'a-drinking at the Chequers.' The landlord of the village inn would occasionally, in order to cheer the depressing dulness and monotony, when the labours of the day had concluded, and possibly with an eye to business, enlist the services of a band of itinerant musicians, and this would produce the effect of attracting a motley auditory to the tap-room to drink and smoke. The band of performers would perhaps correspond to that which Sir John Hawkins has described in his 'History of the Music,' viz. half a dozen old fiddlers who scraped away some such ditty as 'Sellenger's Round,' 'John, Come Kiss Me,' or 'Old Simon the King,' until both they and their audiences were fairly tired out; after which as many performers on the hautboy would grate forth, in the harshest and most discordant of tones, the enlivening strains of 'Green Sleeves,' 'Yellow Stockings,' or 'Gillian of Croydon,' while the company danced upon the green turf. When this had concluded, politics, turnips, taxation, footpads, and highwaymen formed the several topics of conversation. The rude forefathers of the hamlet either smoked one after another out of the same

pipe, or entertained each other with hoary-headed, blood-curdling legends of ghosts, hobgoblins, and witches, which in one form or another had survived from a remote past.

On the Sabbath day, the whole village assembled and met together 'with their best faces and cleanliest habits,' for public worship either in the parish church or the meeting-house, at which time a country fellow would distinguish himself as much in the churchyard as a London citizen did upon Change, the whole parish politics being generally discussed therein either before the ringers began to pull the bells, or after the sermon. As Robert Bloomfield, writing many years after the 'Spectator, described it in his poem of 'The Farmer's Boy':—

> 'Midst timely greetings village news goes round,
> Of crops late shorn, or crops that deck the ground.
> Experienc'd ploughmen in the circle join;
> While sturdy boys, in feats of strength to shine,
> With pride elate, their young associates brave
> To jump from hollow-sounding grave to grave;
> Then close consulting each his talent lends
> To plan fresh sports when tedious service ends.

When Shakespeare made Hamlet declare that he had for three years noted that 'the toe of the peasant came so near the toe of the courtier,' he was in all probability giving expression to what had really come to pass in Elizabethan England. His words would have been more in accordance with truth as applied to Hanoverian England. One very great point of difference between country houses then and now lay in the comparatively small amount of furniture which they contained. Carpets were not utilised in every room, nor were hearthrugs, nor even curtains. Ornaments were kept in closets and chests, whence they were brought out only on state occasions. Domestic musical instruments were few in number. Hardly one house in a hundred possessed a pianoforte. A tinkling harp, a harpsichord, a guitar, and even a spinnet, was a rarity, and to be found only where people were passionately fond of music. As late as 1782, there were no more than two or three pianofortes in the town and neighbourhood of Leicester.[1] Ability

[1] Gardiner, *Music and Friends*, i. 33; Dr. Rimbault's *Hist. Pianoforte*, p. 139; Mrs. Papendiek's *Journal*, i. p. 107.

to produce musical sounds on a set of drinking glasses modulated with water, was the highest instrumental accomplishment to which country folk then aspired. In the opening book of his 'Task,' the poet Cowper sings the sofa 'with plenteous wadding stuffed.' Of these there was usually one to be seen, and no more. Easy-chairs were very far from common; likewise, also, mahogany tables and glass mirrors, card-tables, sideboard-tables, and square dining-tables. An eight-day clock stood in one corner of the principal sitting-room, and very often a cuckoo clock.[1] Pictures were few, and those that did adorn the walls would now be pronounced sorry daubs, for pictures by the best masters could not be had for nothing. Families read very little, and consequently required no book-cases; they wrote still less, and consequently neither a writing-desk nor an escritoire would have been found, although, perhaps, a writing-case. Letters were written in very indifferent ink with quill pens, because there was no other kind, and as adhesive envelopes had not yet been devised, they were usually folded over, when indited, and sealed with a huge stick of sealing-wax. Gas, that great convenience of modern home life, was of course not thought of, and on the mantelpiece stood two brass candlesticks, with a pair of snuffers on a tray, side by side with a tinder and a flint. There was a cupboard or press with an open door, generally fixed in that part of the drawing-room where it was most likely to be seen, and this contained a punch-bowl, tea-cups and saucers of china, some pewter vessels, and a set of delf ware. It was far from common to meet with a hung bell, or bell-pull, servants being summoned to the table by a hand-bell, or by a loud rap upon the table with the handle of a spoon or knife. In addition to those musical instruments which have just been mentioned, a virginal was sometimes found in country houses. It was an instrument that closely resembled a spinnet, but was constructed rectangularly, like a small pianoforte.

Drawing-rooms, which were generally the most important in a country house, often contained trundle beds. In many country houses there were no grates in the sleeping apartments; fires,

[1] *Cowper's Corr.*, ed. Johnson, p. 430.

when they were required, being kindled on the hearth. Grates (which were generally constructed of brass, and were highly polished) stood detached from the back and sides of the fireplace, which were ornamented with painted china tiles. The principal rooms were panelled with oak, or were lined with tapestry depicting the scenes in the Old and New Testament history. Box beds were largely used, the air being carefully excluded from occupants of them during the night season by means of sliding doors. Flanders chests, chests carved and coloured in the Flemish style, were often to be found, as well as what were called 'wood-jacks,' rollers on which circular towels revolved.

Kitchen utensils were not numerous, and those that were employed were generally remarkable for their clumsy construction. Roasting jacks were rarities, and spits, the wheels of which, where they were used, were turned either by a servant or by a dog trained expressly for the purpose ; and, but for his assistance, the progress of the dinner was often as much impeded as if the machinery of a factory had ceased to work or a mill stream had been diverted from its course. Roberts states that, in the closing years of the century, cooks and scullions were often to be seen running about the cathedral city of Wells, diligently inquiring for curs that had forsaken their savoury charges.[1] The number of saucepans, plates, dishes, and other utensils was deficient in comparison with those of the present day. Wooden platters and trenchers were used in almost every household, chiefly by young people and the domestics. Tea urns might be found, and, in exceptional cases, coffee services. Hooped drinking mugs and black jacks, pitchers made of leather and often lined with metal, for holding beer, were used in wealthy households. Warming-pans, now rarely seen, were then very common. Little silver was in daily use. Silver forks were seen only in the houses of nobles and foreign ambassadors. Sometimes silver-handled knives and forks were to be seen, as well as knives with bone or ebony fluted handles, with silver ferrules. Forks still had only three

[1] *Social Hist. of Southern Counties*, p. 301. See also *Autob. and Corr. Mrs. Delany*, i. 441.

prongs, and dessert spoons had not yet come into fashion. Knives were constructed with broad ends for eating peas and catching up gravy or the juice of fruit.

Glancing now at the nature of domestic economy in provincial society in that age, we shall observe many curious points of difference. Thus, in the vicarage of Steventon, a small village in the north of Hampshire, about seven miles from Basingstoke, of which the father of Jane Austen held the incumbency, knives with broad round ends were generally used. People drank tea, coffee (which they roasted and ground themselves), cider, perry, beer and a number of home-made wines, particularly mead. Vegetables, especially potatoes, were eaten much more sparingly than they are at present. Mr. Austen-Leigh states that in Hampshire in the last century the idea prevailed that potatoes were to be eaten only with roast meat. In 1788 white soup, according to Mrs. Papendiek, was then used only for ball suppers. Beef or mutton broth was sometimes served in a large dish, with the meat and vegetables. Much fish was eaten both in summer and winter—cod, smelts, herrings, sprats, oysters and lobsters, during the former season, salmon, sea or river trout, generally pickled, mackerel, haddock, Dutch plaice, shrimps, and prawns during the winter. Joints of beef, mutton, or veal, calves' heads, knuckle of veal with gammon of bacon, were all favourite dishes among the upper and middle ranks of society. Ham, being an expensive luxury, was seldom eaten, except at galas. A boiled leg of home lamb with chops round it was highly esteemed. Geese, ducks, fowls, and pigeons were but sparingly eaten.

At the commencement of the eighteenth century wheaten bread was much more generally used by the labouring classes, and this affords a proof that their condition was slightly improved. In 1725 it was even in use in the poorhouses in the southern counties of England. The author of three tracts 'on the Corn Trade,' which were published about the date of the accession of George III., says, 'It is certain that bread made of wheat is become much more generally the food of the common people since 1689 than it was before that time, but it is still very far from being the food of the people in general.

The writer then proceeds to a numerical calculation, of which the result is that, assuming the whole population to be six millions, little more than half ate wheaten bread, 739,000 ate barley, 888,000 ate rye bread, and about 623,000 contented themselves with oaten bread. This calculation was applicable only to England and the Principality, and of the number consuming wheaten bread the proportion assigned to the northern counties of England—York, Westmoreland, Durham, Cumberland, and Northumberland—was only 30,000. Sir Frederick Eden, in his work on the 'State of the Poor,' published in 1797, asserts that, about half a century prior to the time at which he composed that elaborate treatise,

> the quantity of wheat used in the county of Cumberland was so small that it was only a rich family that used a peck of wheat in the course of the year, and that was used at Christmas. The usual treat for a stranger was a thick oat-cake, called 'haver bannock,' and butter. An old labourer of eighty-five remarks that when he was a boy he was at Carlisle market with his father, and wishing to indulge himself with a penny loaf made of wheat-flour, he searched for it for some time, but could not procure a piece of wheaten bread at any shop in the town.

Very slight study was bestowed upon horticulture, and the culinary vegetables which were raised were comparatively few in number and somewhat inferior in quality. Cabbages, turnips, and carrots were the only vegetables in general use. The chief artificial means employed in quickening the growth of indigenous plants or rearing exotics were hotbeds—greenhouses not coming into fashion earlier than the accession of George III. There was little cultivation of garden shrubs and flowers, which were usually allowed to run wild, with the single exception of the tulip, which was greatly prized, and for which the most exorbitant prices were given and received. Gardening was much affected by wealthy cultivated noblemen, but, until Pope gave the great blow to it by an excellent paper in the 'Guardian,' it was still stiff and formal in style. The chief beauty of a garden was considered to consist in its regularity, and an unnatural taste was prevalent among gardeners for clipping trees and shrubs into the shapes of architectural ornaments, and

even of men, birds, and beasts, just as the Dutch do at the present time.

In the closing decade of the last century, the customary dinner-hour in good families was two o'clock, and for dinner parties one hour later. The idea of dining by candlelight was considered to be something very dreadful. At the dinner-table no conversation took place save upon the one topic of eating and helping. Hosts and hostesses would repeatedly press their guests to partake of certain dishes on the table, and the neglect of this was considered a great lack of generosity and hospitality. Wine was never placed upon the table, and if a guest desired to take wine with a lady, he requested her to name what she preferred, and having done so, he called the servant to bring two glasses of it from the sideboard. Afterwards, the decanters of port and madeira were deposited on the table, along with a small dessert, and then the guests, when taking wine with one another, were at liberty to help themselves. If the gentlemen assembled desired to make a drinking bout, as they generally did, it began after supper.[1] Toasts were much in vogue at this time, the principal one in Jacobite families being 'God bless the King and confound the Pretender.' A common practice among adherents of Jacobitism was to place a bowl full of water in the centre of the table, and when the king's health was being drunk, to hold the wineglass across it in remembrance of 'the king over the water.' One stanza framed obviously for the conciliation of either party ran to this effect :—

> God bless the king—I mean the Faith's defender,
> God bless—no harm in blessing—the Pretender.
> But who Pretender is, or who is king,
> God bless us all—that's quite another thing.

Hard drinking was as much the rule in country society as in town society at this period, though it may well be doubted whether every country town equalled Lichfield in this respect ; for Dr. Johnson told Boswell that he remembered the time when all the decent people it contained got drunk every night

[1] See the curious and interesting *Journal of Mrs. Papendiek*, ii. 48-49.

upon ale, and were thought none the worse for it. William, Earl of Shelburne, reverting to the state of English manners between 1737 and 1757, says that in his time, at Devizes, when families visited each other, the men were shown upstairs to the men, the women to the women. The men immediately sat down to wine or beer, and when they had done sent to tell the women. Several of the best gentlemen, members for the county, drank nothing but beer.[1] There is no doubt that Fielding was giving expression to what was often the actual truth in provincial society when he says that

> It was the custom of Squire Western every afternoon, as soon as he was drunk, to hear his daughter play on the harpsichord; for he was a great lover of music, and perhaps, had he lived in town, might have passed for a connoisseur, for he always excepted against the finest compositions of Mr. Handel; he never relished any music but what was light and airy, and, indeed, his most favourite tunes were 'Old Sir Simon the king,' 'St. George he was for England,' 'Bobbing Joan,' and some others.

The facetious winebibber was an ever-welcome guest at the tables of provincial residents, and the conversation, so far from running on Shakespeare, taste, and the musical glasses, ran on tales of waggery and upon topics even less decorous. Frivolous speech in country circles commonly made part, indeed often the greatest part, of the amusement at the table after the ladies had retired, and hospitality almost invariably ended in beastly intemperance. Convivial intoxication was the prevalent fashion of all social gatherings, and the current of familiar conversation was tainted with indecency. What are commonly designated 'hangers on' were often to be found in country houses, besides a class of persons not even now extinct, who were destitute of any fixed home, possessed of slender means of support, and who invited themselves to the houses of their friends and acquaintances in turn, for weeks and days at a time. In families where butcher's meat formed a portion of the daily fare, salted meat was much used during the winter months. During the winter, barley broth and salted beef, with a boiled fowl, were standing dishes at dinner-table

[1] Quoted from a chapter of his autobiography, by Lord E. Fitzmaurice in his *Life of Shelburne*, i. 51. See also *Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27825.

in the house of almost every country gentleman. The beverages among ordinary families appear to have been home-brewed ale, and gin, claret, and brandy punch. It was the usual custom for country gentlemen to keep a large cellar of fine-flavoured old red port wine. Tobacco was greatly in use, and also snuff, which was taken by both ladies and gentlemen. Glee-singing was a favourite amusement in convivial parties.[1] Guests, at their departure, in provincial society, were expected to present 'vales,' a kind of largess or blackmail, to give it its most correct designation, to the servants—a tax that always made visiting a most expensive matter, and caused all persons possessed of small means to think twice before accepting invitations from their more wealthy friends.

Both sexes manifested much negligence in the matter of undress. The gentlemen would walk about during the best part of the morning in greasy night-caps and dirty dressing-gowns, and the ladies would make their appearance in worsted short gowns and aprons. The washing of linen was always done at home by the servants, of whom no more than two were kept, as a rule. Their wages varied from seven to eight guineas, with a sovereign for tea or beer. Housemaids were then not overburdened with work, so that they could assist their mistresses at the toilet, a hairdresser being employed either by the quarter for daily dressing, or on special occasions. The spare time of the domestics was generally occupied in needlework.

Dancing was much in vogue. The chief dances were the hornpipe, the cotillon, the reel, the country dance, and the stately minuet, which was performed amid an admiring throng. Dinner parties often concluded with dancing to the scraping of a fiddle or the tinkling of the harpsichord. Ladies were condemned to dance for the whole of the evening with the same partner, who was compelled by the canons of contemporary etiquette to visit her on the following morning. In many of the important provincial towns—particularly Birmingham, Leicester, Nottingham, Weymouth, Southampton, and Liverpool—the townspeople, on a humble scale, emulated Ranelagh and Vauxhall in the summer months, and the Pantheon

[1] Gardiner, *Music and Friends*, i. 55.

in the winter months, the same apartment serving as a dancing saloon and a tea room.[1] Exhibitions of fire-eating, performances on the musical glasses, concerts, freaks of nature, bell-ringing, fantoccini, gallanty shows, *al fresco* balls, wild beast caravans, living 'colossuses,' and other deformities, constituted the usual amusements of the inhabitants of provincial towns. On Sunday evenings in summer the *élite* of provincial society were in the habit of assembling together in the tea-gardens, and there feasting upon cakes and jorums of tea or home-brewed ale.

We read that Hull, previous to 1780, was 'one of the gayest places out of London.' And that the theatre, balls, large supper and card parties, were the delight of the principal merchants and their families in the town, who dined at two, and met at each other's houses for sumptuous suppers at six o'clock. Cards followed.[2] Card-playing wielded very extensive sway over the upper classes of provincial society. Professor Pryme recollected, about 1788, that during a visit which his mother paid to a lady friend then living near Nottingham, on two or three occasions there were six ladies of the party, and for three days they played at quadrille, commencing directly after breakfast, without ceasing, four being occupied at the table and two being at liberty, taking their turns to go in as the others went out.

But the chief amusement of many country gentlemen was cock-fighting, of which the mains that were to be fought were advertised in the county newspapers, and were then as common as cricket matches have become in these days. The protracted conversation upon the relative merits of their several birds, at the dinner-tables of country gentlemen, would frequently result in a cock-fight, orders being given for the birds to be brought into the dining-room.[3] An inhabitant of Leicester has left on record that he had known in the closing decades of the century as many as one hundred cocks to be slaughtered in the

[1] Dr. John Langford's *Century of Birmingham Life, passim;* Cornelius Sutton's *Nottingham, passim;* Aikins's *Country round Manchester*, p. 362; Gardiner, *Music and Friends;* Davies's *Hist. of Southampton*; Roberts's *Social Hist. of Southern Counties.*

[2] *Life of Wilberforce*, i. 8.

[3] Roberts, *Soc. Hist. of Southern Counties*, p. 421.

course of a single day in that town alone.[1] Milder sports, such as angling, bowling, and archery, golf and ninepins, were patronised in a moderate degree. Skating in the fields and meadows was a favourite diversion enjoyed by all ranks during the winter season. Almost every country house and town worthy of the name possessed a butts or archery ground, and a bowling green. Horace Walpole mentions that, visiting Chatsworth upon one occasion, the old Duchess of Devonshire 'staid every evening till it was dark in the skittle ground keeping the score,' a note which shows clearly not only that people of quality were in the habit of indulging in its exercise, but that both sexes participated in the diversion.

The cycle of the year was not altogether one dull round of laborious activity. The monotony of existence was frequently relieved by wakes and fairs, and there was scarcely a village the inhabitants of which did not hold their feast on the anniversary of the day on which the parish church was dedicated, a time when all kinds of sports, such as bull and bear baiting, cock-throwing, wrestling, leaping, quoit-throwing, singlestick, trap-ball, the lifting of great weights, and other ruder trials of bodily strength and activity formed the principal entertainment. Similar amusements prevailed when the farmers held their sheep-shearing. Foot-ales, church-ales, candle-blocks, and harvest-homes, usually celebrated on St. Roch's Day, August 16, afforded opportunities for races for smocks, prison base, and the performance of various feats of prowess.[2] The present generation, among whom the amusement is universally condemned for its cruelty, can hardly realise to what an extent cock-fighting was then practised. It entered into the occupations of the old and young. Even schools had their cock-fights, for both pedagogues and their pupils thought that there was nothing discreditable in encouraging it. 'Travellers agreed with coachmen that they were to wait a night if there was a cock-fight in any town through which they passed. A battle between two cocks had five guineas staked upon it. Fifty guineas, about the

[1] Gardiner, *Music and Friends*, iii. 32.

[2] *Howard Corr.*, ed. Croker, i. 96; see also the curious rambling *Memoirs* of Charles Hulbert, the historian of Shropshire, published in 1852.

year 1760, depended upon the main or odd battle. This made the decision upon a "long main" at cock-fighting an important matter. The church bells at times announced the winning of a long main.'[1]

Those gentry who did not keep a carriage generally kept what was called a double horse—a strong, steady animal with a pillion behind the saddle for the use of the ladies; and for the convenience of mounting and dismounting, horse-blocks were placed in different parts of every country town.[2]

Young people who could read amused themselves by laughing and weeping in turns over Defoe's entrancing fiction of 'Robinson Crusoe,' Swift's 'Gulliver's Travels,' the 'Seven Champions of Christendom,' the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments,' 'Mother Bunch's Fairy Tales,' 'Robin Goodfellow,' the fascinating legends of 'Billy Pringle's Pig,' 'The Children Sliding on the Ice all on a Summer's Day,' of 'Goody Two-shoes,' 'Little Red Riding Hood,' 'Giles Gingerbread,' and others too numerous to be mentioned, all of which, tastefully bound in flowered and gilt Dutch paper, might be obtained for sixpence each, on application to the friend of children, Mr. Edward Newbery, who dwelt at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard. The newspaper would be duly left by the newsman at the door, who went his rounds on a pony, and in the evening the family would gather a group around the fire, when someone would proclaim the events of the week by reading the budget aloud. The poet Cowper, in a letter addressed to his friend Joseph Hill, dated from Olney, October 20, 1783, says:—

I see the winter approaching without much concern, though a passionate lover of fine weather and the pleasant scenes of summer; but the long evenings have their comforts too, and there is hardly to be found upon the earth, I suppose, so snug a creature as an Englishman by his fireside in the winter. I mean, however, an Englishman who lives in the country, for in London it is not very easy to avoid intrusion. I have two ladies to read to, sometimes more, but never less—at present we are circumnavigating the globe, and I find the old story with which I amused myself some years

[1] Roberts, *Soc. Hist. of Southern Counties*, p. 421.
[2] Gardiner, *Music and Friends*, i. 92.

since, through the great felicity of a memory not very retentive, almost new.[1]

There were no illustrated weekly periodicals of faultless typographical execution to while away the long winter evenings. The ladies took little or no interest in books and reading, few could play any instrument, fewer still could paint or draw, so that they were fain to busy themselves with the needle, or to find recreation in their workboxes or netting-cases. The gentlemen amused themselves with cards and backgammon, or draughts or chess, or, if everything else failed, busied themselves in the stable or the dog-kennel.

Through what channels, in default of the newspaper, did country people far removed from towns become apprised at all of what was going on in the world? By the pedlars or itinerant merchants, a class that has almost entirely disappeared, who in the wide extent of their perambulation contrived to pick up a vast amount of information respecting men and things, which lost nothing in the repetition. It was not every country town that contained a post-office, and those that did could never ensure the safety of the mail bags from the depredations of footpads and highwaymen, by whom every coach road was always infested.

In most of the large towns, people had opportunities in the second half of the century for seeing the best theatrical companies when they went upon tour. No town of any importance lacked a theatre by the time George III. came to the throne, and the arrival of the players was always looked forward to with great interest. Hannah More incidentally mentions that while on a visit to Bungay, in June 1777, she saw the tragedians of the city of Norwich, who sojourned there for a month once every two years in their progress through the two counties. Everybody of consequence visited the play each night, and the authoress testifies to having witnessed the performance of, among other plays, General Burgoyne's 'Maid of the Oaks,' and Colman and Garrick's 'Clandestine Marriage.' That eccentric individual Tate Wilkinson, writing in 1790, stated that it was then

[1] *Cowper's Letters*, ed. Johnson, p. 197.

nothing uncommon to meet an acquaintance in the York theatre on the Saturday, who if asked how he liked the play would answer, 'Why; tolerable; but having seen it last Wednesday night so delightfully acted at Drury Lane, it made the comedy appear very tiresome.'[1] Wilkinson thought that the improved state of the roads, and the various conveniences for the middle as well as the upper classes, the increase of fashionable dissipation, were all combining to the ruin of country theatres. At the time he wrote, many of the evils which we have had occasion to notice in the London stage existed in an even worse degree in provincial theatres.

Stages (he says), not being formed into an amphitheatre, were without any order or decency, merely rows of forms, one level with the other . . . and as to the article of being freed from beaux behind the scenes, a greater blessing could not be wished or more devoutly prayed for; as it cannot be conceived how dreadful in the country that would sometimes prove (my own situation at Shrewsbury is one instance), the hauteur and dignity of such visitants being often so insulting and imperious as not to be described.[2]

The turf must not be lost sight of in this brief review of English pastimes and amusements prevalent in the last century. Although it did not hold so high a place in the national affection as it does at present, it numbered many supporters and devotees among the nobility who liberally promoted its interests, notably the Duke of Cumberland, the Dukes of York and Grafton, the Earl Grosvenor, Sir Charles Bunbury, the Dukes of Queensberry, York, and Bedford, and the Earl of Derby, to whom the Oaks and the Derby Plates owed their institution. So great had the reputation of the Newmarket races become by the latter half of the century, that in 1753, according to the 'World' newspaper, 'garrets were let for four guineas each for the time of meeting.' Its attractions, however, were soon rivalled by those of Melton Mowbray, the veritable paradise of fox-hunting. In the latter half of the eighteenth century 'there were seven meetings at Newmarket in the year, at which times in the houses of the aristocracy and gentry, which had greatly increased, there were the gallops to be seen, and

[1] *Memoirs*, iv. 103.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 122-123; see also Palmer's *Yarmouth*, i. 352-3.

cracks at exercise. At noon the racing began, the card for the most part being what is now called meagre. The races were over early in the afternoon. Then came dinner—with port and walnuts, or port and dry biscuits, according to the season—the whist table, hazard, and E.O.' Sport in the last century began much earlier than it does now, but by degrees the farmers began to raise a loud outcry against the country gentlemen who passed like a blight over their fields. This grievance was at length redressed by an Act of Parliament, whereby fox-hunting was prohibited until after the crops had been garnered. Ascot Heath races were very popular on account of their proximity with the inhabitants of London. George III. generally contrived to be present at these races, although he took but little interest in them, a quality which his eldest son did not share. The races held on Epsom downs were equally popular from about 1730; so were those run on Doncaster Moor in Yorkshire, which from 1728 became more and more attractive, by reason of the free and open gambling which they encouraged, many gentlemen of fortune ruining themselves at them.[1] In 1779 the corporation expended the sum of seven thousand two hundred and eighty-two pounds in the construction of a new course and a grand stand. The St. Leger sweepstakes were initiated by Colonel St. Leger, of Park Hill, near Doncaster, in 1776, although they did not receive that name until two years later, and then only at the suggestion of the Marquis of Rockingham, at a dinner at the Red Lion, the principal inn in Doncaster, out of compliment to him with whom the race had originated. These races were invariably accompanied by cock-fighting, cub-hunting, thimble-rigging, and prick the garter. York was a great place for horse-racing from about 1731, which according to Rice was the year in which the first race was run over Knavesmire. In 1754 the inhabitants of York subscribed munificently towards the erection of a grand stand—'substantially and well built of red brick, having on the ground-floor convenient offices and rooms for the entertainment of company, for at that time the county races

[1] Grosley, *Observations on England*, i. 156-64; Gardiner, *Music and Friends*, iii. 93 4.

were the occasion of a week's conviviality, tea and wine drinking, balls, assemblies, and card parties being the order of the day with the gentry and their guests.'[1] Still more celebrated was the town of Newmarket, in Suffolk, which was more closely identified in the last century with horse-racing than any other town in the kingdom. Chester, Newcastle, Stamford, Northampton (these two last for bull racing and baiting meetings), were all famous in the last century for horse-racing, and their periodical meetings never failed to bring among the spectators the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood.

The first coursing meeting, it is stated on the authority of Lord Wilton, was established under the auspices of Lord Orford at Swaffham in Norfolk in 1776.[2] Daniel, in his 'Rural Sports,' says that the number of members of this society was confined to the number of letters in the alphabet, and that the dogs belonging to each member were named after the initial letters which he bore in the club.[3] The second meeting was the Ashdown Park meeting, founded by Lord Craven at Lambourn in the county of Berks four years afterwards.

All sorts of races were promoted by the provincial commonalty. Thus the readers of the issue of 'Parker's London News' of Monday, June 3, 1724, are informed that,

> On Wednesday in the Whitsun, a race was run at Northampton for five guineas, between two bulls, four cows and a calf. The first were rid by men and the calf by a boy. The cows threw their riders and the calf tumbled down with his, and was thereby distanced, so that one of the bulls won the wager before a concourse of people.

Hunting was a sport much favoured and practised, the fox, the hare, and the deer being its principal objects. The Belvoir hounds were among the most celebrated English packs in the first half of the eighteenth century, as well as the Duke of Beaufort's hounds. From about 1750 fox-hunting became the favourite sport of country gentlemen.

Recreation was also found in tennis and in pall mall, a game which was played with balls made of the root of box,

[1] Rice, *Hist. Brit. Turf*, i. 40.
[2] Lord Wilton's *Essay on the Sports and Pursuits of the English*, p. 167.
[3] Daniel's *Rural Sports*, i. 504.

which were gradually attuned to the stroke of the mallet. The art of the game consisted in the player's ability to strike the ball through a high arch of iron; the fewest blows, or a number agreed upon, won. 'Pall mall,' which much resembled our modern croquet, or hockey, derived its name from having been played primarily in the street of the capital known as Pall Mall, and in the Mall within St. James's Park. The balls were always smeared with pellitory before being put away after use.

Cricket was much in vogue in the provinces, especially on the wide grassy commons and heaths of the southern counties of England, the first match on record being that played between Kent and England, on the Artillery Ground in London, in 1746. Four years afterwards the Hambledon Cricket Club was formed, and proved invincible until 1769. Cricket was not confined to the sterner sex. The 'Annual Register' for 1775 contains the record of an extraordinary cricket match which was played at Moulsey Hurst on August 3 of that year, between six unmarried men and an equal number of unmarried women, and which was won by the former, though one of the latter ran seventeen notches.[1] Another proof that cricket was not confined to male players is furnished in the following paragraph transcribed from the issue of the 'Derby Mercury' of August 16, 1745:—

> The greatest cricket match that was ever played in the south part of England was on Friday the 26th of last month, on Gosden Common, near Guildford, between eleven maids of Bramley and eleven maids of Hambledon, dressed all in white. The Bramley girls got 119 notches and the Hambledon girls 127. There was of both sexes the greatest number that ever was seen on such an occasion. The girls bowled, batted, ran, and caught as well as any men could do.

It is scarcely necessary to remark that the cricket bat was not yet in existence, and that the game was played by means of a club, much resembling in shape an antique curved knife. The contest was to place the ball in a hole before the batsman was able to reach it after what was termed his 'run.' Wickets and all the subtleties of the game were completely unknown in the last century.

Wrestling was a very popular exercise, and was considered a

[1] *Ann. Reg.* 1775, p. 290.

manly accomplishment among gentlemen, the natives of the counties of Cornwall, Cumberland, Devonshire, and Nottingham being distinguished in an eminent degree for wrestling—the first and fourth respectively for what was technically termed the 'hug' and the 'kicking.' In the last mentioned county, wrestling among the peasantry owed much to the exertions of Sir Thomas Parkyns, of Bunny Hall near Nottingham, a justice of the peace for the counties of Nottingham and Leicester, who in 1714 published a very ingenious and singular treatise on the subject, a copy of which he presented to George I. and to which he gave the extraordinary title of 'Προγυμνάσματα: the Inn Play or Cornish Hug Wrestler.' The worthy baronet, who was a most ardent advocate of his favourite art, gave prizes of small value but of large honour, to be wrestled for on Midsummer Eves, upon the green levels of Nottinghamshire; and he never felt so gratified with the scene as when he saw one of his manly tenantry and the evening sun go down together. Nor did he ever object to take the most sinewy man by the loins and try a fall for the gold-laced hat (valued at twenty-two shillings) that he had himself contributed. Sir Thomas Parkyns' servants were all upright, muscular, fine young fellows, civil but sinewy, respectful in their demeanour, but yet capable also at the proper times of wrestling with their superior for the mastery. Sir Thomas Parkyns, it is recorded, scarcely knew a day's illness through seventy-eight years, and passed away at Bunny in 1741.[1] After his demise, wrestling was greatly promoted by a gentleman named Trigge, resident at Arnold in the same county, who gave an annual prize of five guineas for its display, until his death, which occurred in 1783. The most skilful wrestlers were often marshalled parish against parish and county against county. The wrestling matches at Bunny, which were regulated in accordance with the rules laid down by Sir Thomas Parkyns in his 'Progymnasmata,' took place in a permanent ring surrounded by posts which were always chained round during the progress of the matches.

The customs of provincial towns were still of a very primitive

[1] *Retros. Rev.* xi. 160-65; Thoroton's *Hist. of Notts*, i. 93; Sutton's *Nottingham*, pp. 44-5.

character. Milk was borne in pails from door to door, and bread was carried in panniers (a term now synonymous with that of bread-baskets) slung on either side of a pony. The shops, although not numerous, were very small, open in front, and badly lighted ; the walls were bare, rarely plastered and occasionally had neither flags nor floor. Comparatively few were protected by glass windows, and when they were it was a libel on the name. Houses generally consisted of two storeys, sometimes three, and their occupants gained access to the upper rooms by creaking staircases, frequently unbalustrated, at the imminent peril of coming to grief at every step in the case of the inexperienced. Most of the windows of country houses at this time were fitted with casements. Not every town could boast, as Manchester could in 1750, that there was a stand of hackney coaches in one of the principal squares.[1] Not every provincial resident was able to set up a carriage. Sedan chairs were the favourite mode of conveyance for ladies when they went to dinner or evening parties. All the towns in the north of England had ancient wooden houses standing in them. Lamps were seldom lighted in summer, and as very few of the streets were flagged, walking was a most tedious operation. The poor of the great towns were crowded in offensive, dark, damp, and incommodious habitations, which too often proved a fertile source of disease. A common rendezvous of the gossips of a country town at that time were the coffee-house (where they went to learn the news) and the shop of the barber-surgeon, an establishment which was usually denoted by a pole at the door. This pole was used by the barber-surgeon (whose chief business consisted in painfully letting blood and drawing teeth) for the patient to grasp during the operation of blood-letting, and when it was not in use it was suspended as a sign, with a bandage tied round it.

In a central position in such towns as had not been devastated by the fiery iconoclasm of the Cromwellian soldiery in the first half of the previous century, the lofty stone cross was still standing, and was used as a place of meeting for

[1] Aikin, *Description of Country round Manchester*, ed. 1795, p. 191.

markets, fairs, and in full markets for the official proclamations of the town criers, for declarations of peace or war, for the news of a victory, the demise or accession of a king, the birth of an heir to the throne, and so on. The market cross was also the customary resort of those in quest of employment.

In the matter of provincial sanitation and comfort, it is incontestable that the advantage did not not lie with that generation. The inhabitants of almost every country town are now more or less familiar with small-pox, but its ravages no longer, as was the case before the practices of inoculation and vaccination became general, result in a clean sweep of nine-tenths of the young people they contain, to say nothing of the adult residents, with a rapidity and power approaching that of a tornado. Medicines were to be obtained only on application at the apothecary's shop, an establishment which at that time was (as Gray once told Mason) 'a terrible thing.' Adam Smith computed the value of all the drugs in one at no more than five-and-twenty pounds. Habits of uncleanliness prevailed to a lamentable extent, and thousands had a mortal dread of soap and water. It was the usual practice among countrywomen to tread soiled linen instead of washing it. Goods were conveyed from one town to another by means of numbers of horses. The neck of the leader was hung around with musical bells, and the others followed in the direction whence its sounds proceeded. Mendicants, vagrants, and tramps traversed the country in any number, especially in the summer, when no henroost nor farmyard was safe from their depredations, and many of the great towns swarmed with destitute children, who slept in ash-holes or on doorsteps.

Even the well-to-do inhabitants of country towns were clad in materials woven on the spot. Farmers generally converted the russet fleeces shorn frem the black sheep into a mixed cloth, very farely milled, of which their garments and their wives' best gowns were made. Articles of wearing apparel descended from fathers to their children, and even to their children's children. It was stated by a writer in the 'Annual Register,' long after the accession of George III., that it was far from uncommon to behold, adorning the heads of country-

folk, hats which had been very fashionable in the reign of Charles II.; and so late as the closing years of the century, the greater proportion of the lower ranks in Lancashire eschewed shoes and stockings, and commonly wore clogs.[1]

Such evidence as we possess all goes to prove that the mode of living among the lower classes in the provinces was simple and economic compared with that of the present day. Neither meat, although not more than twopence-halfpenny per pound, nor wheaten bread, three farthings, was ever tasted by the working classes except on rare occasions, barley bread constituting their ordinary food. Butcher's meat was rarely eaten by labourers and servants, unless in the houses of farmers, who generally reserved for household consumption what they were unable to expose for sale. The cultivation of turnips and artificial grasses being in an embryo state, a great portion of the winter food for cattle consisted of straw and hay. Some slight idea of the prices of commodities in the rural districts, during the latter half of the reign of George II. and the first half of that of George III., may be gained from a perusal of the following extracts from the private accounts of the Rev. T. Baker, who was born in the early part of the eighteenth century, in the parish of Barlestone, in the county of Leicester, where he possessed much property. This divine, who was something of a sportsman, and was also fond of the bottle, held no preferment, but occasionally assisted his neighbouring reverend brethren. The accounts which he kept of his household expenditure, between 1752 and 1774, are extant, and shed some little light on the rural domestic economy of that age.

| | | £ | *s.* | *d.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1752, March 7. | A lobster . . . . . | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| „ | Gallon of rum . . . . . | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| „ | A gallon of wine . . . . . | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| „ | 4½ strikes of malt . . . . | 0 | 16 | 6 |
| „ | 1½ lb. of hops . . . . . | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| May 23. | 1½ lb. of pike . . . . . | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| „ | 2 lbs. of sugar . . . . . | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| „ | ½ lb. common tea . . . . | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| „ | 6 glasses . . . . . | 0 | 5 | 8 |

[1] Gardiner, *Music and Friends*, i. 586.

| | | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1752, May | A dozen pounds of candles . . | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| „ 10. | Removing horseshoes . . . | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Oct. 10. | For Tom's haymaking . . . | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| „ | To Cope, for a day's work . . | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| July 2. | Mr. Deacon for a suit of clothes . | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| „ | For a pair of breeches and waistcoat, secondhand . . . . | 0 | 14 | 0 |
| 18. | To Mr. Holwell for a new hat . | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| 1762, Mar. 26. | Couple of fowls . . . . | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| June 6. | 6 lbs. of salmon . . . . | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| 1771. | Barrel of oysters . . . . | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 1771, Oct. 13. | For three pair of dancing gloves . | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| „ 15. | Burgamot pears, 1 gallon . . | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Sept. 23. | To Tom Biddle for a wig . . | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| Dec. 5. | For two pairs of black worsted stockings. . . . . | 0 | 4 | 6 |
| | 3 pairs of light grey stockings . | 0 | 7 | 6 |
| 1766. | To Davis for making a pair of leather breeches . . . | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Buttons, thread, tape, leather for a waistband, pocket lining . | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 1755, July 20. | Towards buying a bassoon at Barlestone . . . . | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| 1757, Mar. 28. | For ink . . . . . | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| „ „ 30. | For ¼ hundred of quills . . . | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1766, April 4. | For a leg of mutton . . . | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| | Housekeeping expenses, 1772 . | 26 | 0 | 2 |
| | Clothing expenses, 1774. . . | 6 | 11 | 5 |

Parson Baker died at the comparatively early age of fifty-one, and was buried in the chancel of Barlestone church.[1]

To the close of the century many customs hallowed by time lingered on in rural England. The curfew bell regularly tolled the knell of parting day in many a country village, and the villagers still reared the Maypole bedecked with flowers, and danced round it.[2] Co-existent with these innocent customs, flourished much of what can only be termed heathenism in disguise. Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire people still, for example, entertained the belief, doubtless shared in by the peasants elsewhere, that the ghosts of those parishioners who were destined to die in the year following might be seen passing one by one into the church in grim array, by keeping vigil for

[1] Capt. Whitby, *Proc. Leics. Architect. and Archæol. Soc.* 6 ii.
[2] Pryme, *Autobiographic Rec.* p. 20.

one hour each side of midnight at the church porch, on April 25, St. Mark's Eve, for three years in succession.[1] At a small inn in the village of Bambridge near Wensleydale, in the north-west of Yorkshire, it was customary, so late as 1799, for a horn to be sounded every evening at sunset from the feast of Holy Rood, September 27, to Shrovetide, in order that benighted travellers might be apprised where to resort for shelter, a small endowment having been left for the purpose. The old custom of perambulating the parish bounds was also retained.[2] On the day preceding Mid Lent Sunday it was customary for many farmers' wives who kept stalls in market towns to expose for sale thereon preparations of boiled unground wheat, which housewives addicted to the observance of ancient usages would seldom fail to purchase, boil in milk, season with sugar or treacle, flour and allspice, and serve up in tureens or tubs to their families on the following day as furmety, with raisins, sugar, and spice.[3] St. Valentine's Eve was celebrated by the drawing of lots, and St. Valentine's Day with much ceremony. Similar rites attended the celebration of St. Agnes' Eve in the rural districts.

Young girls desirous of dreaming of their future husbands would abstain through the whole of St. Agnes' Eve from eating, drinking, or speaking, and would avoid even touching their lips with their fingers. At night they made their 'dumb cake,' so called from the rigid silence with which its manufacture was attended. The ingredients were supplied in equal proportions by their friends, who might also take equal shares in the baking and turning of the cake, and in drawing it out of the oven. The mystic viand was next divided into two equal portions, and each girl taking her share carried it upstairs, walking backwards all the time, and finally ate it and retired to rest. A damsel who had duly fulfilled all these conditions, and had also kept her thoughts fixed on the weal of her husband all the day, confidently expected to see her husband in her dreams.[4]

There was also a due annual observance of the festival of Bishop Blaize, in towns of Essex, Suffolk, Yorkshire, and other seats of woollen manufacture, by a procession through the town of people connected with the wool trade, the centre of attrac-

[1] Forby's *Vocabulary of East Anglia*, p. 407.
[2] Knight, *Passages of a Working Life*, i. 28.
[3] Hulbert's *Memoirs*, p. 41.
[4] Forby's *Vocabulary*, p. 408.

tion being a woman riding in state in a postchaise carrying a lamb in her lap, to commemorate Bishop Blaize, bishop of Sebah in Armenia, the reputed inventor of the art of wool-combing, who suffered under the Diocletian persecution in 289.

Other curious customs deserving of mention, as in vogue at that time, were 'chaff riddling,' a mode of divination into the future much resorted to in Yorkshire. It consisted in throwing the barn door open at midnight and procuring an instrument called a 'riddle' and chaff. This done, such as desired to unlock the secrets of the future went into the barn, and in turn commenced the process of 'riddling.' If the riddler himself was destined to die within the year, he saw two figures pass the open barn doors bearing with them a coffin, but if he were not so fated, his eyes beheld nothing. When property had been stolen and a strong suspicion attached to a particular person, against whom any positive evidence could be found, recourse was often had to divination by means of the church bible and the church door key.[1] On Palm Sunday, or the Sunday before Easter, it was customary, in certain parts of England, for both rich and poor to eat figs. At Tissington, a small village in the neighbourhood of Dovedale in Derbyshire, the peculiarly graceful custom of well-flowering still continued to be observed annually on Holy Thursday. According to Rhodes, the author of a book on Peak scenery, the rites and ceremonies of this custom began by all the wells in the village, five in number, being decorated with wreaths and garlands of newly-gathered flowers, disposed in various devices. Sometimes boards were used, which were cut into the figures intended to be represented, and covered with moist clay into which the stems of flowers were inserted to preserve their freshness, being so arranged as to form a beautiful mosaic work, often tasteful in design and vivid in colouring. The boards thus adorned were so placed in the spring that the water appeared to issue from amongst beds of flowers. On these occasions the villagers arrayed themselves in their best attire, and opened their houses to their friends. A service was held at the parish church, where a sermon was preached; after-

[1] Forby's *Vocabulary of East Anglia*, pp. 398, 399.

wards a procession took place, and the wells were visited in succession ; the Psalms for the day, with the Epistle and Gospel, were read at each well, and the whole service concluded with a hymn sung by the church singers to the accompaniment of a band of music. After this the people separated, and the remainder of the day was spent in rural sports and holiday pastimes.[1]

Westmoreland people observed many customs, of which the local records afford numerous examples. On St. John the Baptist's day the inhabitants of Ambleside went up in large numbers to spend the summer night on the top of the High Street, where they kindled a fire and amused themselves with games and races. Rush-bearing was retained largely in the north of England, as well as boon-ploughing, which was observed by the neighbours when a tenant took possession of a new farm. Festivals were often celebrated beneath oaks. Shrove Tuesday was the day upon which badger-baiting was celebrated. Plough Monday witnessed many antics and much mummery in remote country villages. The morrice dancers, decked out in ribbons and hawks' bells, furnished with pipe and tabor, dragged what they called the 'fool plough' from cottage to cottage, singing ballads, and performing antics for which they were rewarded by gifts of money and food. The huge Yule log was put upon the fire on Christmas Eve, and the wassail bowl brimming with spiced liquor was circulated among the guests. Then were to be seen the boar's head decked with rosemary, the glee singers and minstrels proceeding from village to village, and the performance of the sword dance, the hobby horse, and the mummers.[2] In the mining districts of England the *virgula divinatoria*, or divining rod, was commonly used in seeking for mineral wealth in districts where it was supposed to exist.

Numerous fairs in that age acquired more than a mere local celebrity. There was, for example, Bury fair, which was famous all over England, not so much for its wares as for the people who attended it. It was held annually in October on a spacious plain called Angel Hill, which lay betwixt the abbey and the gate of the town of Bury St. Edmunds. Private lodgings were

[1] Rhodes' *Peak Scenery*, p. 315. [2] Forby's, *Vocabulary*, p. 422.

secured by people of the first fashion and consequence. All the neighbouring nobility and gentry went to it every day it was held, the Duke and Duchess of Grafton, Lord and Lady Cornwallis,

and (as the author of the 'Magna Britannia' for 1721 says) many knights and gentlemen of estates, and with them an infinite number of knights' and gentlemen's daughters from Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk, who come to market, and that not in vain, for this fair seldom concludes without some considerable matches or intrigues very advantageous to the knights errant who venture themselves. The diversions of this fair are, raffling till it is time to go to the comedy which is acted every night, which being ended the company go to the assemblies, which are always in some gentleman's house or other during the fair.

The issue of the 'Suffolk Mercury' or 'St. Edmund's Bury Post,' for September 28, 1730, contains an advertisement setting forth that 'James Hebert, Mercer and Weaver, from the Red Lion and Star, in Fenchurch Street, London, is come to his shop, the corner of the Cook Row in Bury, during the time of the fair, with newest-fashioned silks, &c.,' while a Mrs. Johnson, also from London, announces that she is at her shop in Bury fair, selling 'elecampane, fenugreek, pickles, and turmeric.' The 'Gentleman's Magazine' for 1730 contains a long poem on the ladies at Bury fair, in which the names of the ladies belonging to many of the leading county families are introduced. So late as 1792 the readers of the county newspaper are informed that 'the Theatre, Bury, opens on Wednesday, October 10, with the "Road to Ruin."' Stourbridge fair, which was held on a common near Cambridge, was another fair much attended at this time. Defoe speaks of it as the greatest in England, the amount of goods disposed of, and their multitudinous variety, as enormous. In the north of England, Brough Hill cattle fair, described by the poet Gray in his 'Journal of a Tour in the Lakes,' attracted great numbers of the farmers and country gentlemen from the adjoining counties. On September 30, 1769, the Cambridge recluse found himself in Westmoreland :—

A mile and a half from Brough on a hill lay a great army encamped. It was the Brough cattle fair. On a nearer approach appeared myriads of horses and cattle on the road itself; and in

all the fields round me a brisk stream hurrying across the way; thousands of clean, healthy people, in their best parti-coloured apparel, farmers and their families, esquires and their daughters, hastening up from the hills and down the fell on every side, glittering in the sun, and pressing forward to join the throng.[1]

Among other rural customs prevalent at that time may be mentioned that of bidding to a weddding. Marriages were celebrated with much merrymaking, and sometimes with a great deal of horse-play; more especially in such now obsolete formalities as throwing the stocking, and sack posset, and the old shoe. Marriages were occasions which afforded specious excuses for the relations on both sides as well as friends and neighbours to assemble together in almost any number, and in cases where families were wealthy it not unfrequently happened that for several days the scene of the ceremony resounded with the sound of revelry by night as well as by day. The weddings of the lower classes were generally celebrated at the parish church at an early hour in the morning, and like those of high life, attracted a numerous concourse. Preceding the pair there generally stalked a fiddler or two, who scraped away some merry tune till the company arrived at the churchyard gate, where they waited till the couple again emerged. Then they took up the same position to the bridal house, where their services were generally in requisition for the marriage feast. Sykes, in a curious work containing the local records of the counties of Northumberland and Durham, states that at the solemnisation of the nuptials of two young persons at Bishopwearmouth on May 21, 1753, they were preceded to church at half-past seven o'clock in the morning by three violins and a bagpipe, and accompanied by seventy couples hand in hand, all distinguished by blue cockades, besides an innumerable crowd. The bill of fare for dinner comprised five bushels of malt brewed for table-beer, ten bushels for ale, sixteen quarters of lamb, eight turkeys, ten green geese, eight hams, and four dozen of hens, twelve ducks, twenty quarters of mutton, ten quarters of veal, sixteen neat's tongues, a quarter of beef roasted whole, twenty stones of beef boiled, six bushels

[1] *Gray's Works*, ed. Gosse, i. 249.

of white peas, eighty pounds of butter, sixteen pies. The bride's cake was carried between two persons on a hand barrow to the bakehouse; twenty gallons, eight dozen of lemons, seven stones of double refined sugar, ten bushels of wheat, a hundredweight of tobacco, six gross of pipes, tarts, whipposset, cheese-cakes and jellies innumerable.

The ceremonies attendant upon provincial funerals frequently partook of a very imposing nature. The Rev. Owen Dinsdale, rector of Wilford, a small village near Nottingham, writing to Professor Pryme in the close of the year 1791, in reference to the funeral of a lady friend, said:—'I was one of twelve pall-bearers. The entrance into the hall was very solemn indeed. It was all hung with black, and lighted with lamps. The church was also hung with black cloth, even the pillars, from top to bottom. The coffin was highly ornamented with large plumes of feathers from London.'[1] One custom that was always observed at country funerals among the humbler classes in the last century, was that of carrying sprigs of rosemary, which were distributed among the mourners before they set out, and which they bore in their hands until the coffin was lowered into the grave, when they were all simultaneously thrown in after it. Another provincial custom observed in many parts of the north of England, Cumberland and Westmoreland, for example, consisted in inviting the friends and neighbours of a wealthy person to dinner on the day of his interment.

In nearly every village at this time there lived a weaver, and in every cottage and farmhouse there was a spinning-wheel. Villagers purchased flax, and having spun and bleached it, gave it to the weaver. Gardiner says that girls might have been seen spinning under the shade of the walnut-trees around Leicester, combining with their love-songs the whizzing of their wheels; and Mr. Austen-Leigh, in his deeply interesting 'Memoirs' of Jane Austen, says that around Steventon, the birthplace of the eminent authoress, in Hampshire, poor women found remuneration in a like employment. As the spinning-wheel is one among the implements that have long since fallen to dumb

[1] *Autobiographic Rec.* p. 16; see also Palmer's *Yarmouth*, ii. 303.

forgetfulness a prey, his description of it and the method of working it may not be inappropriate here :—

> The implement used was a long narrow machine of wood, raised on legs, furnished at one end with a large wheel, and at the other with a spindle on which the flax or wool was loosely wrapped, connected together by a loop of string. One hand turned the wheel, while the other formed the thread. The outstretched arms, the advanced foot, the sway of the whole figure backwards and forwards produced picturesque attitudes, and displayed whatever of grace or beauty the workwoman might possess.

The sterner sex, according to the same writer, frequently found pleasure in spinning, though they adopted a somewhat different mode, making use of a neat little machine of varnished wood, like Tunbridge ware, generally turned by the foot, with a basin of water at hand to supply the moisture required for forming the thread, which the cottager took by a more direct and natural process from her own mouth.[1]

Bearing in mind the retrograde condition of education at this period, is it to be wondered at that three-fourths of the population of the provinces passed their lives from infancy to old age in a state of semi-intellectual thraldom, and that they entertained the most absurd notions and ridiculous superstitions? Is it surprising to find that a ghost was supposed to haunt every manor and castle, or that a witch took up her abode in every parish? Is it odd that the lovesick Phyllises, the hapless Chloes, and the forlorn Delias of so slumbering and pacific an era would dissect with commendable diligence the sediment in their tea or coffee cups for outward and visible signs of the constancy of their absent swains? And what was more natural than that they should regularly have arisen on the morning of Easter Day to see the sun dancing at its rising, or that, as the 1st of May came round, they should have sauntered into the fields at early dawn, there to hearken with rapt attention to the ominous note of the cuckoo, mechanically taking off the left shoe as the bird gave utterance to its peculiar cry, in hopes of discovering a single hair like unto that which grew on the pates of their lovers? What more natural than that the said

[1] *Memoirs of Jane Austen*, p. 49; Gardiner's *Music and Friends*, iii. 112.

Chloes, Delias, and Phyllises should have celebrated Midsummer Eve by gathering roses, by concocting love-charms, and by a host of other silly, heathenish ceremonies, now infinitely more honoured in the breach than in the observance?

Nor is it surprising that strange fancies entered the minds of the peasantry. The autobiography of William Huntington, a fanatical preacher who called himself 'the Sinner Saved,' furnishes a remarkable instance of this. 'At that time there was a person named Godfrey in the town,' he wrote in reference to Ashford, the place of his nativity, 'an exciseman, of a stern and hard-favoured countenance, whom I took notice of for having a stick covered with figures, and an ink-bottle hanging at the buttonhole of his coat. This man I imagined to be employed by God Almighty to take notice and keep an account of children's sins.'[1] Hannah More testifies to the gross ignorance prevailing in the semi-barbarous village of Cheddar situated in a craggy part of the Mendip Hills, quite detached from human society, in the latter quarter of the eighteenth century. 'We found,' wrote she, 'more than two hundred people in the parish, almost all very poor; no gentry; a dozen wealthy farmers, hard, brutal, and ignorant. . . . We saw but one Bible in all the parish, and that was used to prop a flower-pot.' Cowper bears similar testimony in the second half of the eighteenth century to the heathenish manners of the people of Olney, a village in the northern division of Buckinghamshire, where he had fixed his abode, and of which his friend the Rev. John Newton held the curacy, where children of seven years of age infested the streets every evening cursing and blaspheming and singing unseemly songs, at the connivance of their parents.[2]

Few among the lower classes were able to read, and if they could they never thought of buying books, and a subscription

[1] Huntington's Autob. prefixed to his *Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer*, 4th ed. 1798, pp. 34, 35; Lord Gambier's *Memorials*, i. 261, 267.

[2] *Cowper's Letters*, ed. Johnson, ii. 25; see also the appalling account of Boldre and Fawley (two parishes situated on the borders of the New Forest in Hampshire) contained in the *Literary Recollections* of the Rev. Richard Warner, the historian of Bath, vol. i. pp. 332-76, and evidence of the heathenish state of Yorkshire between 1736 and 1797 in the curious Autobiography of Thomas Wright of Birkenshaw, p. 5 *et seq.*

to a circulating library could not be entertained. Their acquaintance with books generally extended to the Scriptures, Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and a few religious works (so-called religious), remarkable only for bad English and worse theology. A country parson, even of literary tastes, rarely expended money in books save those of a professional character. Now and then the benefice of a rural divine would be found to contain a collection of books worthy of the name of a library, but they consisted principally of ponderous treatises on divinity, or voluminous editions of the Fathers, and of the great writers of classical antiquity, which had been heirlooms in the owner's family for perhaps centuries before.

Several relics of barbarous ages, now happily numbered among the things that were, still lingered on here and there in out-of-the-way districts of the country. There was still retained a low rolling-cart or carriage called the tumbril, a name derived from the Latin tumbrella, in which offenders were sometimes fastened with an iron chain, and drawn bare-headed with hue and cry through the principal streets of a country town. By the side of the duckpond on many village greens stood the stocks, a wooden machine wherein vagrants, strolling players, and those who had imbibed liquor not wisely but too well, were ordinarily secured by the heels until they repented of their former naughtiness.[1] On the same spot might have often been seen the 'ducking' or 'cucking' stool wherein bakers who served their customers with bread short of weight, old crones suspected of witchcraft, or scolding women were seated, and placed 'over some deep water into which they were thrice let down to cool their choler and heat.' The poet Gay makes allusion to this method of punishment in his poem called 'The Shepherd's Week,' wherein he says :—

> I'll speed me to the pond, where the high stool
> On the long plank hangs o'er the muddy pool,
> That stool, the dread of every scolding quean.

So, too, in a small collection of miscellaneous poems com-

[1] Robert's *Soc. Hist. of Southern Counties*, p. 150; Brand's *Hist. of Newcastle*, ii. 292. When Joseph Baretti visited Honiton in 1760, the ducking stool was still used as a punishment for witches. *Travels*. i. 9.

posed by a Northamptonshire gentleman of the name of West, published in 1780, after speaking of its use as a legal remedy for 'noisy dames' and 'jarring females,' he proceeds to say :—

> Down in the deep the stool descends,
> But here at first we miss our ends ;
> She mounts again and rages more
> Than ever vixen did before.
> So throwing water on the fire,
> Will make it burn up but the higher.
> If so, my friends, pray let her take
> A second turn into the lake,
> And rather than your patient lose,
> Thrice and again repeat the dose ;
> No brawling wives, no furious wenches,
> No fire so hot, but water quenches.[1]

A correspondent of the 'Gentleman's Magazine' states that until 1776 'cucking' constituted the preliminary punishment of all females committed to the Liverpool house of correction. Entries relating to disbursements for ducking-stools may frequently be found in the parish registers, and churchwarden's books of accounts relating to this period. The latest instance of its infliction, recorded by Brand, the historian of popular antiquities, is at Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, 1745, but there are several instances on record of its having been inflicted in the closing years of the century, as, for example, upon one Mrs. Gamble at Scarborough, so late as the year 1797.

Among other secular penances in vogue in England in the eighteenth century were the cage or pillory, the pruning-knife for the excision of a culprit's ears, a pair of scissors for the cutting off of his nostrils, and an iron for the searing of his wounds. Inveterate topers were frequently punished by being compelled to perambulate the streets attired in what was called a 'drunkard's cloak.' This instrument, if such it can be called, was nothing more than a sugar or brandy hogshead, one end of which was removed, and the other bored through the top with three holes, one sufficiently large for the admission of the offender's head, and the other two for the protrusion of his hands.[2] By this means the vessel rested upon the shoulders

[1] *Poems*, &c., p. 86. [2] Brand's *Hist. of Newcastle*, ii. 192.

of the drunkard, who was led through the streets as a spectacle for contumely and contempt. The 'drunkard's cloak' was frequently inflicted at Newcastle-on-Tyne in the last century. 'Riding stang' was another local punishment inflicted occasionally upon the intemperate, particularly in the county of Cheshire.[1]

In some quarters of the northern counties recourse was occasionally made to that painfully ingenious punishment by which man sought to cure the weaker vessel of that dear privilege of hers, scolding, variously called the 'branks' or 'scold's bridle,' or 'gossip's bridle,' which, according to some authorities, was of Scotch origin, and gradually worked its way over the border. It must be clearly borne in mind that it never was a legalised instrument of punishment, but it nevertheless was one of the means by which those petty kings, but arch-tyrants, of provincial towns, the mayors, bailiffs, constables, and justices, dressed in a little brief authority, were enabled to support their power and to hold the common herd under subjection. A poor unfortunate woman having been presented by her husband to the mayor as a scold or gossip, a functionary deputed for the purpose took down the 'scold's bridle,' a kind of crown or framework of iron, and straightway proceeded to lock it upon her head. The crown was armed in front with a gag (a plate, or a sharp-cutting knife-point), which was placed in her mouth, either so as to prevent her moving her tongue, or in such a manner that if she did move it, or attempt to speak, it was cut in the most frightful manner. With this gag firmly pressed and locked against her tongue, the miserable creature (whose sole head and front of offending had perchance the extent of merely raising her voice in defence of her social rights against a brutal husband, or that of having given utterance to unpalatable truth of some person or persons holding high office in the town) was paraded through the streets, led by a chain attached to the hand of the bellman, the beadle, or the constable, to the market cross, there to be subjected to every conceivable insult and degradation, without even the powers left her of begging for mercy or of holding out promise of amendment in the

[1] Hulbert's *Memoirs*, p. 42.

future. When the allotted time for the punishment had expired, the bridle was removed, and the poor woman turned loose into the market-place, lacerated, disfigured, bleeding, faint, and degraded, to be the subject of comment and jeering among her neighbours, and of exultation among her persecutors. It is unnecessary to repeat instances of the infliction of the branks, and one must therefore suffice. The annals of Morpeth record that in 1741, 'Elizabeth, wife of George Holborn, was punished with the branks for two hours at the market cross, by order of Mr. Thomas Gair and Mr. George Nicholls, then bailiffs, for scandalous and opprobrious language to several persons in the town, as well as to the said bailiffs.'

Every village, too, was supplied with its whipping-post, usually adjoining the stocks, to which offenders were chained and publicly whipped. All considerations of sex were thrown to the winds. Men and women alike were whipped at the 'cart's tail,' as it was called, all over the country—that is to say, tied to the back of a cart, which was driven slowly through the streets followed by a noisy concourse of people. The following citation from the parish register of Barnstaple, in the county of Devon, will show to what an extent it was inflicted in that part, and it may be inferred that it was no severer there than anywhere else :—

1745. Mary Taylor sentenced to be whipped next Friday, and the Friday following, between the hours of two and three, from the prison door through the streets, and back again to prison. 1747. Joyce, the wife of John Robins, and Sarah Reed, to be whipped in prison next Thursday. 1748. Grace Rodgers, to be whipped next Friday till her body is bloody. 1752. Joan, the wife of Thomas Gibbs, to be whipped on Friday from the prison to the Red Cross, and from thence back again till her body is bloody. 1771. Elizabeth, the wife of Humphrey Britton, to be severely whipped from the prison to Northgate next market day, from the hour of ten to twelve, till her back is bloody, and from thence back to prison. 1774. Alice Triggs to be whipped in court—which was done. 1776. Mary Jones, for larceny—'being very ill'—sentenced to be sent to the workhouse till she is recovered, and then to be whipped. 1776. Mary Melcher, to be severely whipped naked until she is bloody. 1778. Elizabeth Thorne, to be severely whipped the two next market days until bloody. 1784. Elizabeth Miller, to be publicly whipped on her naked back. 1787. Elizabeth Vaughan, to be whipped at the cart's tail on Friday, from prison to Northgate and back, on her

naked back, until her body is bloody. 1789. Sarah Johnson and Elizabeth Venner, to be publicly whipped on their naked backs from the Golden Lion door to High Cross, and there discharged.[1]

This punishment was permitted to disgrace the Statute Book until the year 1820. The great change which has been effected since the eighteenth century passed away, in the different relations of social life in the provincial districts of England, is at once conspicuous and gratifying. The incongruous mixture of moral laxity and external restraint prevalent in that age has been succeeded by a state of society infinitely more rational and infinitely more refined.

In the limited space that is now left at our command, we shall seek to give a brief consideration to the manufactures and industrial operations of England during that period. To gain an insight into these, it will be necessary for us to follow in the footsteps of Daniel Defoe, Arthur Young and others, who made it their business personally to inspect the scenes which they described.

The seat of the manufacture and fabrication of cloth at this time was principally located in the West of England, such towns as Frome, Trowbridge and Devizes, with their tributary villages and hamlets, being the home of what Defoe called 'this prodigy of a trade.' The fame of the clothiers of Gloucestershire was spreading far and wide by reason of the scarlet and other coloured cloths which they annually turned out in immense quantities. The various ports of the West of England were steadily growing into importance, more particularly Barnstaple and Bristol the port of the West. Bristol, when Defoe visited it, did not favourably impress him. He found its streets narrow, its rivers narrow, and the minds of the generality of the citizens narrow. Passing still farther westward, the author of 'Robinson Crusoe' paused at Taunton, where he saw eleven hundred looms at work for the weaving of common stuffs, and was assured that there was not a child in the town above the age of five years who could not earn its own bread. At Honiton he witnessed the manufacture of serge, and at Exeter he gazed in admiration upon a serge market, where he was informed that serge to the

[1] *West. Antiq.* i. 115; see also Cowper's *Corr.* ed. Johnson, i. 279-80

value of a hundred thousand pounds was sometimes sold in the course of a single week. Giuseppe Baretti, a later traveller than Defoe, was told on his visit to Exeter (1760) that its serges were chiefly exported into Catholic countries for the use of various monastic orders, and he testifies to having seen several storehouses in the city which contained as many bales of serge as would have sufficed to make an intrenchment round the camp of the Austrians.[1]

Leicestershire alone, of all the counties in the kingdom, at that time produced the largest sheep and horses, and Defoe mentions in his 'Tour through England' (1722), that in many parts of the county the graziers were so wealthy that they had become gentlemen. In the town of Leicester itself, and in the neighbouring villages, the weaving of stockings by frame employed large numbers of the population. 'One would scarce think it possible,' he wrote, 'that so small an article of trade could employ such multitudes of people as it does.' Proceeding to Nottingham, and thence to Derby, Defoe saw the same industry furnishing employment to the townsfolk, and as he passed through the town of Richmond in Yorkshire, he noted a market for woollen and yarn stockings, which they made very coarse and ordinary, and sold accordingly.

In the course of his progress through Derbyshire, the traveller visited the famous lead mines of the High Peak, where he was afforded an opportunity for witnessing the operations of the miner.

> We saw (he wrote) the poor wretch working and heaving himself up gradually, as we thought with difficulty. He was clothed all in leather, had a cap of the same without brims, and some tools in a little basket which he drew up with him. Besides his basket of tools he brought up with him about three-quarters of a hundredweight of ore.

The fen county of Lincoln was, when Defoe visited it, an 'oft drowned county,' and he mentions that even its very ditches were navigable, and that the country folk proceeded from town to town chiefly by means of boats. He marked the wild fowl 'decoys,' and the draining operations which had just then commenced, and found that notwithstanding all that hands

[1] *Journey from London, &c.*, i. 17–18.

could do or art contrive, the waters still prevailed, the banks broke, and whole levels were overflowed together.

Upon getting into Lancashire, Defoe visited 'the village' of Manchester. Preston, the 'proud Preston,' he states was 'beyond the trading part of the county,' and was moreover 'full of attorneys, proctors, and notaries.' When the traveller entered Lancashire from the western part of the country he was ferried over the river Mersey to Liverpool, and 'was carried on the shoulders of some Lancashire clown, who comes knee-deep to the boat's side to truss you up.' The like of the Dock at Liverpool he considered was not to be seen in any place of England, London excepted. Having decided to visit Yorkshire, Defoe states that he followed the post road from Liverpool to Bury, and thence to Halifax. When he started it was about the latter end of August, and thick snow even then covered the hills. On reaching Rochdale, he was offered the services of a guide, but these he declined. He ascended Blackstone Edge in the midst of a thunderstorm, and the journey down again was a terrible one. In the valley he waded knee-deep through a brook, and then was forced to mount another hill, and to wade through another stream; and, in a journey of eight miles, he was obliged to repeat this labour eight times, greatly to his discomfort. He has not recorded the impressions which the scenery of Yorkshire produced upon him, but the description that he affords of the industries of that county is worthy of note. As he approached Halifax, he found the cottages wedged closely together both in the bottoms and on the hillsides. After he had passed the third hill, he beheld the country stretching before him like one continuous village, though every way mountainous; and as the mists rolled gradually away, he could see at each cottage a tenter, and on almost every tenter a piece of white cloth sparkling in the sun. Each house on the hillside possessed its little rill, conveyed in gutters from above; and on the heights there was coal, so that all the requisites for carrying on manufactures were at hand. No idlers were to be found. In each house women and girls were actively engaged in spinning or carding, and the men worked either at the looms or the dyeing vats; 'the store of good ale flowing plentifully' among

the latter. Defoe visited Leeds in the era preceding the erection of the Cloth Hall, and thus he furnishes a graphic description of the great cloth market. From the bridge to the Market House, we are told, trestles were placed in the street and a temporary counter was formed. The clothiers who came in from the outlying districts seldom brought with them more than one piece of cloth, and after they had refreshed themselves with a pot of ale, a bowl of porridge, and a trencher of beef (regularly provided for twopence by the public-house keepers), took their stand at their trestles by six o'clock in the summer and by seven in the winter. Each clothier having placed his cloth lengthwise upon the counter, 'a mercantile regiment drawn up in line,' the factors came up, examined it, and if they concluded a bargain, did so in a whisper. Before long the clothiers took their departure, each carrying his piece of cloth to the purchaser's abode. In the space of an hour business was concluded, and the market place was given over to the shoemakers, hardware men, and other retailers.

Passing on eastward, Defoe found himself in Norfolk, from the farthest parts of which county droves of geese, 'sometimes a thousand or two in a drove,' were to be seen moving slowly onwards to their fate from the beginning of August, feeding on the stubbles afterwards, and then holding on to the end of October, when the roads began to be too stiff for their broad feet and short legs to march in.' All over the county of Norfolk ceaseless activity reigned, both as regards manufactures and seafaring occupations. Defoe furnishes proof of his assertion that the county had more tradesmen than gentlemen in it, by referring to the fact that the pheasants were left unmolested in the stubbles. The dwellers in the villages and hamlets in the vicinity of Norwich were almost entirely employed in spinning yarn; and the denizens of Norwich were to be found either working at their looms, or in the combing shops, and twisting mills. Numbers of hands were employed in the Yarmouth fisheries. By easy stages, Defoe reached Chelmsford, the county town of Essex, of which he has nothing to say beyond that, at the period of his visit, it was a large busy town, full of inns, which were principally maintained by the visits of

carriers and drovers on their way to the metropolis with droves of cattle, and 'almost incredible quantities' of turkeys.

A period of nearly half a century separates the tour of England that was undertaken by Defoe from the tour of the kingdom which was undertaken by Arthur Young. He, it will probably be remembered, set out on his travels from Norfolk, and, during the course of his progress, carefully noted all that was worth noting. The agricultural operations, as pursued in Norfolk, Young seems to have considered were deserving of the highest praise. In Suffolk, he observed much of what he calls 'true husbandry,' and this is the more remarkable, seeing that at the period of his visit the county was only just beginning to emerge from that slough of sloth and inactivity in which it had so long been sunk. Of the scenery round his own home, Aldeburgh, on the coast, George Crabbe speaks in the following terms :—

> Lo, where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er—
> Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
> From thence a length of burning sand appears
> Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears,
> Rank weeds that every art and care defy,
> Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye;
> There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
> And to the ragged infant threaten war;
> There poppies nodding mock the hope of toil;
> There the blue bagloss paint the sterile soil;
> Hardy and high above the slender sheaf,
> The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
> O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
> And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade.

The wages of the outdoor agricultural labour varied in different localities of the county from 4*s.* to 8*s.* a week, without food.[1] He ate very little beyond rye bread, and stony cheese 'too hard to bite,' as Robert Bloomfield described it, for which that county was then famed. Woollen clothing and linen, being very expensive, were entirely beyond the reach of his purse. Tea, sugar, coffee, and the various little luxuries in

[1] See the Rev. J. Howlett's pamphlet on *The Causes of the Increase of the Poor*, 1788, p. 67; see also the *Enquiry into the Influence which Enclosures have had upon the Population of this Kingdom* (1786), by the same divine.

which the modern cottager is able to indulge, he never saw, much less tasted. One half of the rural population ate meat twice a-week, the remaining half went entirely without it. Even the very salt for the curing of the flesh of his pig, if the cottager happened to possess one, was expensive besides being unwholesome. The windows of the wretched hovel, with its thatched roof and its four bare walls, which he called his cottage, remained unglazed, and the smoke of the fire escaped through its 'one chimney.' As to his furniture, he had none worth speaking of, save a bench, a plank upon trestles, an iron pot, and perhaps two or three earthenware bowls. If disease or any other adversity overtook him or his family, it generally carried them off. It is quite true that medical aid of a kind was to be procured, but then it was from such an officer as he who figures in Crabbe's poem of 'The Village'—

> A potent quack long versed in human ills,
> Who first insults the victim whom he kills;
> Whose murderous hand a drowsy bench protect,
> And whose most tender mercy is neglect!

His children grew up grossly ignorant; for, although charity schools, and even Sunday schools, were in existence at that period, they were to be found only in favoured localities. Whenever a chance presented itself Hodge would seldom hesitate to bear his part in a poaching expedition, although he could never be persuaded that he was breaking the law in so doing. Regularly as the Sabbath day came round, and the morning bells 'rang their blest summons to the house of God,' he donned a clean smock, proceeded to church, where he listened to the reading of the liturgy, and joined in the responses.

Most farmers partook of 'meslin bread,' bread consisting half of wheat and half of rye. Ploughboys and other farm servants, as a rule, breakfasted on brown bread soaked in skim milk, and when the county was infested with rabbits their diet consisted largely of 'hollow meat.'[1] The observant eye of Young noted that the farmers' wives never failed to look forward with great impatience to the advent of the 'pack-

[1] See the appendix to Forby's *Vocabulary of East Anglia*, p. 423.

man,' an individual who visited the outlying villages at stated intervals, bearing all kinds of knick-knacks and finery from Norwich and Ipswich, and smuggled tea obtained from the so-called 'free-traders' of the sea-coast.

Of Buckinghamshire Young seems to have entertained a very poor opinion. He was inclined to believe that the husbandry of the Vale of Aylesbury was almost as bad as its land was good. The wheat crops in that district yielded only fifteen bushels per acre, and the barley crops sixteen bushels. This poverty of crop he attributed to the lack of an efficient system of drainage. Oxfordshire, in respect of agriculture, was very far below the average of many of the English counties. The large farmers are described as intelligent and industrious, but neither spirited nor progressive. With Northamptonshire, Young was very favourably impressed. Upon the large grazing farms that he met with on all sides, and upon the 'noble' quantities of cattle feeding upon the sides of the 'gentle hills,' with which the county was everywhere studded, he gazed with unfeigned admiration. The vast tract of hilly country known as the Wold district of Lincolnshire is described by Young on his first visit in 1760 as being 'all warren for thirty miles, from Spilsby to Caistor,' but as being 'improved' on his second visit in 1799. He could find little or nothing to commend during his progress through Nottinghamshire; the extent of good land which was in an improved state of cultivation in that county being small in comparison with the amount of land which lay almost uncultivated. Middlesex presented little attraction, though the few grass farms in the northern districts of the capital were in a flourishing condition. That immense extent of land bordering upon Hertfordshire, known as Enfield Chase, Young regarded as a positive nuisance. East Kent and the Isle of Thanet, in his opinion, fully justified their pretensions to be 'reckoned the best cultivated in England.' Even the poet Gray, when in 1760 he journeyed for the first time in his life along the road leading to Canterbury, was struck, like Young, with the beauty of the surrounding district. 'The whole country,' runs the record in his Tour, 'is a rich and well-cultivated garden—orchards, cherry grounds, hop

grounds, intermixed with corn and frequent villages.' Young had nothing but praise to bestow upon what he beheld in the county of Sussex. In whatever direction he went, he was pleased to see populous villages, cleanly cottages, tenanted by people of a cheerful and contented disposition, and the gardens trim and neatly kept. The Isle of Wight furnished him with 'much entertainment in excellent husbandry,' but he was not at all pleased with 'the melancholy state' of that immense tract of wooded country known as the New Forest in Hampshire, which had been allowed to run riot under the pretext of furnishing supplies of oak for naval purposes. Most of that picturesqueness of scenery which the Rev. William Gilpin, vicar of Boldre, afterwards described in such choice language in his well-known 'Remarks on Forest Scenery' must have been visible, but this does not seem to have struck Young in the least, though he noticed that hundreds of pigs were driven out to feed on its beechmast during the pawnage month of October. In Dorsetshire, agriculture had made very little progress when Young traversed it. Its bleak commons, although composed of excellent soil, lay waste; and on its downs large flocks of sheep fed without turnip culture. Somersetshire presented to his gaze one vast range of waste. He mentions that as he left Bridgwater on his road to Bath, he passed 'within sight of a very remarkable tract of country called King's Sedgmoor,' a flat peat bog, which he further describes as being so rich that its 11,000 acres were lacking in nothing but drainage in order to render them capable of perfect cultivation. It is quite possible that Sedgmoor wore the very self-same appearance at the period of Young's visit that it wore when Monmouth and his officers travelled with gloomy forebodings over its wide expanse from the time-worn square tower of the parish church, Bridgwater, on a certain memorable morning, early in the month of July 1685. Young describes the Quantock Hills, an entire waste of some eighteen thousand acres in extent. Exmoor, which was crown land, consisted of twenty thousand acres and yielded naught else but a scanty picking to a few hundred sheep and ponies from the neighbouring farms. In Cornwall Young noticed that

agriculture was quite a secondary consideration among the population, which consisted mainly of miners and fishermen. South Wales at the period of Young's visit was rapidly rising into importance by reason of its extensive iron and copper works. In North Wales the population engaged in occupations of a purely pastoral nature. In Cheshire it was the same. Lancashire manifested some faint signs here and there of working its vast coalfields. Mid-Lancashire was a district almost entirely agricultural. Over the county of Yorkshire Arthur Young toured with very mixed feelings. He states that he journeyed from Newton along a road 'across Hambledon, a tract of country which has not the epithet black given it for nothing; for it is a continued range of black moors, eleven or twelve miles long, and from four to eight broad. It is melancholy to travel through such desolate land, when it is so palpably capable of improvement.' After passing a succession of such dreary solitary wastes, he beheld a sight that gladdened his heart, 'an immense plain, comprehending almost all Cleveland, finely cultivated, the verdure beautiful.' In the neighbourhood of Newbigill he beheld with great satisfaction 'many improvements of moors by that spirited cultivator the Earl of Darlington.' The twelve miles of country which he passed through between Bowes and Brough filled him with deep regret. The county of Durham exhibited many 'wide tracts of desolate moor,' and what land there was under cultivation stood sorely in need of drainage. In Northumberland Young found millions of acres of improvable moors, which he describes 'as waste as when ravaged by the fury of the Scottish Borderers.'

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE CRIMINAL CODE.

Barbarous nature of the criminal code—Writings of Romilly and Madan upon it—Summary of the penal enactments then in force—Legislative apathy in the reform of the criminal code—Trading justices—Public executions and their attendant evils—Tyburn, and the way there—Popular relish for hangings—Public dissection of malefactors—Suspension in chains—Abolition of the Tyburn procession—Dr. Johnson's opinion touching its expediency—Burning for *petit treason*—*Peine forte et dure*—The pillory and its abuses—The prisons—Incarceration for debt—John Howard and the prison world of England—The Hulks system—Transportation of convicts to New South Wales.

SOME considerable capability for relying upon evidence is positively necessary, not merely in order to understand, but to repose any credence in the criminal code of this land as it existed in the period under inquiry, seeing that that code was one which by combining the elements of the barbarous and the ridiculous in a degree of which it is difficult to convey any adequate conception, was not only a disgrace to human nature, but a standing insult to every principle of justice, and to all the more sacred ties which link man with man. Regarded from the Victorian era, the folly and the cruelty of the penal enactments under which the English people were then content to live appears almost incredible, while the records connected with their various branches fully equal the marvels of old romance, with this fundamental difference only—that there is nothing in the least romantic about them.

The latter quarter of the eighteenth century was a peculiarly fermenting epoch, and the violence of the fermentation was both deeply and widely spread. All the nations of Europe seemed to be seething with excitement and pregnant with possibilities of mutation and of changes that were to affect the

social and political conditions of both governments and classes. Symptoms of the coming change manifested themselves far and wide throughout England in the remarkable quickening of the spirit of inquiry into all radical questions, and in a better understanding of their nature; in the undisguised contempt which thoughtful men began to evince for the reverence which was paid to representative institutions; in the energy with which they sought to destroy the iniquities and absurdities of our criminal jurisprudence; in the heavy blows that they dealt at the anomalies which disfigured the statute book, and at the looseness of thought which produced the fulsome eulogies and the empty platitudes on 'our happy Constitution in Church and State.' A silver lining to the dark cloud which had hung so long over the British penal code was seen in the anonymous publication towards the close of the year 1786 by Thomas Cadell, an eminent London bookseller, whose name is familiar to almost every reader of Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' of a small pamphlet called 'Observations on a late publication intituled Thoughts on Executive Justice,' written, as its title implies, in answer to one which had recently proceeded from the pen of the Rev. Frederick Madan, a prominent adherent of the Evangelical school. The author of this timely *brochure* was Sir Samuel Romilly, a very eminent lawyer, as well as a very distinguished member of parliament in that age, who having come to a conclusion similar to that at which Lord Bacon had arrived two centuries before (namely, that as Time is the greatest of all innovators, its suggestions should not be resisted), proposed to commute, in certain cases, capital punishment for banishment and imprisonment. Nor was that all. Romilly wished to define crimes more precisely than the law then did, and to circumscribe the arbitrary power of infliction that was then given to the judges—power which extended from a few months' imprisonment to the pains of death for one and the same offence. It would be impossible to point to any contemporary publication in which the English code of the eighteenth century is summarised in a more able manner for those who run to read than it is in Romilly's calm and profound disquisition, as an abstract of it will fully demonstrate.

Romilly begins his pamphlet by commenting leisurely on the rapid progress which the popular study of criminal jurisprudence had made, at the time of writing, in the different countries of Europe, and notes with satisfaction that such study had been instrumental in the upheaval of many absurd and barbarous notions of justice that had been prevalent for centuries, and in the adoption of rational principles in their stead. He then goes on to say that almost the only country in which the progress of those principles had been barren of results in regard to the mitigation of the criminal code was England, and that so far from there being 'any prospect of such a reformation,' an attempt had actually been made 'to restore the law to all its sanguinary rigour by the author of Thoughts on Executive Justice, with respect to criminal laws' (Madan), a work which he characterises as proceeding on principles which were then little prevalent, and as breathing a spirit contrary to the genius of the times. Why then, it may be asked, did he attempt to refute it? Simply because he had found 'that the warmth and earnestness of the author's style had gained him converts, and that some of the learned judges to whom his work was addressed had seemed inclined to try the terrible expedient which he recommended.'[1]

In order that his readers may be in a position to judge of the good sense and propriety of Madan's doctrines, Romilly proceeds to pass in review those laws which he had so fervently panegyrised in his pamphlet, and concerning which he had expressed his doubts as to whether any other human system could equal them for the prevention of public injury.

> In entering upon this task (says Romilly), the first thing which strikes one is the melancholy truth that among the variety of actions which men are daily liable to commit, no less than a hundred and sixty have been declared by act of parliament to be felonies without benefit of clergy; or, in other words, to be worthy of instant death.[2]

In this passage he is citing from Blackstone's Commentaries, and in a note draws attention to the fact that since the publication of those commentaries, the number of felonies had been

[1] *Observations*, p. 6. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

considerably augmented by the legislature. Of what nature were the crimes of which this loathsome catalogue was composed? Let us see. To steal a horse or a sheep—to snatch property from the hands of a man and run away with it—to steal to the amount of forty shillings in a dwelling-house, or privately to the value of five shillings in a shop—to pick a pocket of only twelve pence and a farthing—these offences all continued till the end of the eighteenth century to be punishable with death! On the other hand, the attempt of a man to murder his own father was regarded in no other light than that of a misdemeanor. The taking away of the life of another, and the branding of his name with ignominy, was neither considered murder, nor was it deemed deserving of capital punishment. The stabbing of another under circumstances of the blackest malice, if the unfortunate object after a long and painful illness recovered of his wound only to breathe out the rest of his days in torment and disease, was punishable only by fine and imprisonment; the burning of a house, of which the incendiary happened to possess a lease, though it was situated in the centre of a town, and consequently endangered the lives of hundreds of human creatures, was liable to no severe punishment! Inconsistencies still grosser might have easily been detected in the legal definition of crimes. Thus, in certain circumstances, it was possible for a man to steal without being a thief, for a pickpocket to be a highway robber, for a shop-lifter to be a burglar, and for a man who had not the slightest intention of causing injury to the person of anybody to be a murderer. Snatching a watch from a man's pocket was a highway robbery. The theft of ready-gathered fruit was a felony. The gathering of fruit, and the theft of it, was accounted nothing more than a trespass. He who forced his hand through a pane of glass at five o'clock in the afternoon during winter, for the purpose of removing anything that might happen to be in the window, was a burglar, even though nothing might have actually been taken by him. He who, on the other hand, broke open a house, with every circumstance of violence and outrage, at four o'clock in the morning in summer, with the object of robbing, and even murdering its inmates, was classed only

among misdemeanants. The theft of goods from a shop, if the thief was seen to take them, was an offence punishable by transportation; but if he was not seen, that is to say, if the evidence was less certain, then it came under the category of capital felonies, and was visited with capital punishment. Lastly, he who in the act of firing at poultry with intent to steal it, inadvertently killed a human being, was adjudged a murderer and paid the penalty of murder.[1] These were some of the hideous, barbarous, sanguinary statutes which an eminent divine of the Evangelical school had the assurance publicly to declare in 1785 were such as no stranger could contemplate without imagining the English nation 'to be the happiest people under the sun, or without admiring the disposition of the whole, as well as the adapting of every part for the public good'[2] —these were the laws which he exhorted judges to enforce with the utmost rigour, and which, in his opinion, approached as near to perfection as any law emanating from the finite wisdom of humanity could possibly be expected to approach. Now, it is very easy to see that the circulation of opinions like these by men whose station gave them a claim upon public attention, which their principles but ill-merited, could not fail to be productive of the greatest mischief in the minds of the prejudiced and the ignorant, the consequence being that, although not one of Romilly's considerations could be controverted, they were for generations urged in vain. Statesmen shrank like snails into their shells, shrugged their shoulders, and contented themselves with a cold *Non possumus* or a 'Ça ne nous regarde pas.' To drive the state into enterprises of a hostile nature—to inflame the natural animosities of the giddy and unthinking vulgar—to plunge all Europe into the throes of a war about nothing at all—all this they did utterly regardless of home interests, which by degrees became home necessities; utterly regardless of all the well-directed efforts on the part of reformers, who were forced to endure the mortification of constant failure and the humiliating consciousness of being perpetually exposed to them. When the attention of the

[1] *Observations, &c.*, pp. 16–22.

[2] *Thoughts, &c.*, p. 6.

judges was directed to more humane considerations, they were indignantly scouted. The *viginti annorum lucubrationes* had made them familiar with the law, and that was enough. No task is so repulsive as that of unlearning in declining years the lessons that have been learned in the morning of life. The even tenor of their way could not be disturbed. Novel inventions were not to be studied. Newfangled doctrines were an utter abomination.

Lord Campbell tells us, in his life of William Murray, Lord Mansfield, that that celebrated jurist formed a very low and, as he had too much reason to fear, a very just estimate of the Common Law of England which he was called upon to administer; and the reader, after perusing the foregoing summary of it, will doubtless feel inclined heartily to concur in his opinion.

The question now arises, did the English legislators of the eighteenth century, having regard to these flagrant anomalies and defects—proclaiming loudly their own absurdity—endeavour to bestir themselves to take any measures for their eradication? The answer is that there is absolutely not one tittle of evidence to prove that they so much as even attempted to do anything of the kind. On the contrary, they appear in the first place to have evinced an utter insensibility as to their real nature, and in the second, a hopeless incapacity for dealing with them. The members of which the British House of Commons was then composed were an easy-going body of men, who were content to let matters take very much their own course; they shunned knotty problems, and expected things that went wrong to set themselves right. That aggregate of thought, feeling, and prejudice, which in these days is denominated public opinion, had then no channels through which adequate expression could be given to it. The newspaper press, treated more like a refractory child than anything else, was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. The consequence was, that the legislature of that day bequeathed the agreeable task of supplying the defects of the penal code and abolishing what Southey justly called 'the intolerable follies and chicane of the law,' as a sort of heritage to the more enlightened legislators of the succeeding century, as a problem for the exercise of the ingenuity

of such honoured men as Sir Samuel Romilly, Sir James Mackintosh, Jeremy Bentham, Sir Robert Peel, and Lord Brougham.

The cause of law and order at that period suffered untold injury by reason of the scandalously corrupt manner in which the magistrates executed justice. The principal source of incomes of these officials was derived from the fees which they succeeded in squeezing from wealthy transgressors of the law. Hence the term 'trading justices'—who were for the most part a lazy, incompetent, illiterate set of men, who were openly bribed, not only by porters and chairmen, but also by the keepers of gambling hells and disorderly houses. The upper classes, as already said, when they came under their cognisance, generally contrived to get off scot free. 'Here I must again remind the reader,' wrote Fielding in his inquiry into the causes of robbery, 'that I have only the inferior part of mankind under my consideration. I am not so ignorant as to imagine that there is a sufficient energy in the executive Parliament to control the authority of the great, who are beyond the reach of any unless capital laws.' And what he wrote in 1751 would have been equally true in 1800.

So indifferently did magistrates administer justice, that they fairly decided cases which were brought before them only when they perceived that there was nothing to be gained on either side. A little pamphlet by Sir Thomas de Veil, an eminent Bow Street justice, entitled 'Observations on the Practice of a Justice of the Peace, intended for such Gentlemen as design to Act for Middlesex or Westminster,' published in 1747, helps us considerably in forming an idea of some of the many corrupt practices which had become connected with the magistracy, and of the Scylla and Charybdis between which even a well-intentioned magistrate had to steer. Thus the candidate is cautioned 'to avoid familiarity with the constables, who were apt to take great liberty upon such freedoms'—to be careful in discriminating what is and what is not 'cognisable before him'—as the Old Bailey solicitors made it their business to entangle magistrates in difficulties, and very frequently brought matters before them in a very courteous

manner, and used the most plausible arguments to induce them to act in matters which they very well knew were cognisable only in the courts of Westminster Hall: and whenever they prevailed and effected their design, they immediately caused an action to be brought against the justice for concerning himself where he had no jurisdiction. The candidate for office of magistrate is also cautioned to take no more in the matter of 'justices' fees or perquisites' than that to which he is legally entitled—and in making bargains with the clerks. To these secrets of the magisterial office in the last century may be added two that are contained in Fielding's account of his stewardship rendered in his 'Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon':—

> By composing, instead of inflaming, the quarrels of porters and beggars (he says), which I blush when I say hath not been universally practised, and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of about 500*l.* a year, of the dirtiest money upon earth, to little more than 300*l.*, a considerable portion of which remained with my clerk; and, indeed, if the whole had done so, as it ought, he would be but ill-paid for sitting sixteen hours in the twenty-four in the most unwholesome as well as nauseous air in the universe, and which hath in his case corrupted a good constitution without contaminating his morals.

In these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the magistracy should have fallen into disrepute, or that the acting magistrates in the city and liberty of Westminster, in order that their persons might be the better secured and that they might procure a more ready obedience to the laws, should have received the king's permission to distinguish themselves by wearing the arms of Westminster with the emblems of the magistracy, on a gold shield, fastened to a riband hanging down the breast.[1] Burke declared in the House of Commons in 1780, that the justices of Middlesex were generally the scum of the earth, carpenters, brickmakers, and shoemakers; some of whom were notoriously men of such infamous character that they were unworthy of any employ whatever; and others so ignorant that they could scarcely write their own names. Rigby attempted to defend the Middlesex magistrates from Burke's

[1] *Ann. Reg.* viii. p. 153.

censures, but felt constrained to admit that the office was a very troublesome one, and that as no person of distinction or family would undertake it, it was right to give *douceurs* to those who would.[1] Burke, in reply, charged his opponent with defending a class of men to whom he would neither speak nor suffer to come into a room where he was, and his evidence was endorsed by that which James Townsend, a thief-catcher, gave before a Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the police of the metropolis in June 1816.[2]

The country justices of the last century were a boorish set of brutes, both ignorant and tyrannical. 'What the devil could tempt you to act as justice of the peace?' inquired Gilly Williams of his friend George Augustus Selwyn, in reference to a gardener in the employ of Selwyn, who had been committed to gaol for some trifling offence. 'This is Trapolin with a vengeance. What, evidence, party, and judge too? If you do not make it up with the man soon, some rogue of an attorney will plague your heart out in the King's Bench.' Readers of Fielding's novels cannot fail to have noticed that he never misses an opportunity of exposing their malpractices. Take 'Tom Jones' for example. Chapter the ninth of the seventh book is taken up with an account of the altercation which occurs between Squire Western and his sister, occasioned by the refusal of the former to commit her servant, Mrs. Honour, for impertinence to Bridewell. The justice, upon more mature reflection, told his sister that he was of opinion, that as there had been no breaking up of the peace, there was no punishment in the law for Mrs. Honour's offence. To which Mrs. Western replied, that 'she knew the law much better;' that she had known servants very severely punished for affronting their masters; and then named a certain justice of the peace in London, 'who,' she said, 'would commit a servant to Bridewell at any time when a master or mistress desired it.' Perjury, it should be mentioned, was at this time a regular trade.

[1] *Parl. Hist.* vol. xxi. Debate, May 8, 1780, p. 592.

[2] See on this subject Smith's *Life and Times of Nollekens*, i. 129; Watson's *Life of Fielding*, i. 73; Blizard, *On the Police*, pp. 3-30; Sir John Hawkins's *On Highways*, p. 58, and *Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27826, p. 142.

Those who followed this profession in the capital, indicated it by walking about Westminster Hall with a straw in their shoes. No wonder Bishop Berkeley declared that there was 'no nation under the sun where solemn perjury was so common, or where there were such temptations to it.' The lawyer who required convenient witnesses knew perfectly well where they might be found. Going into Westminster Hall, he would address a 'straw-man' with a 'Don't you remember?' (at the same time holding out a fee). If the perjurer deemed it insufficient, he would remain mute. But as the fee increased, his mental faculties would brighten, his memory would return, and he would walk into court, there to give upon oath such evidence as might be required.[1]

In 'Joseph Andrews' there is the character of Lawyer Scout, 'one of those fellows who, without any knowledge of the law or being bred to it, take upon them, in defiance of Act of Parliament, to act as lawyers in the country, and are called so.' It was at the instigation of Lady Booby, that Joseph Andrews and Fanny Goodwin were carried before a justice—the former for cutting and the latter for receiving one hazel twig of the value of three halfpence or thereabouts. Squire Booby arrived upon the scene, and inquired of what crime the young pair had been found guilty. 'No great crime,' answered the justice; 'I have only ordered them to Bridewell for a month.' 'But what is their crime?' continued the squire. 'Larceny, an't please your honour,' says Scout. 'Ay,' says the justice, 'a kind of felonious, larcenous thing. I believe I must order them a little correction, too, a little stripping and whipping.' At the squire's request Joseph and Fanny were set at liberty. Similar portraits of English justices of the peace are to be found in Fielding's novel of 'Amelia.' In the second chapter of that novel the reader makes the acquaintance of Jonathan Thrasher, Esq., one of the Westminster justices—who, although the laws were contained in a great variety of books—'had never read one syllable of the matter.' Similar portraits of justices are contained in the novels of Fielding's illustrious rival, Smollett. There is Mr. Justice Buzzard, for example,

[1] Brayley's *Londiniana*, i. 210–11; Hone's *Every Day Book*, i. 157.

in 'The Expedition of Humphry Clinker.' The hero of this novel, it may be recollected, was sent to Clerkenwell prison for highway robbery—although innocent of the charge. But Justice Buzzard's severity to Clinker was nothing more than a hint to his master to make him a present in private, as an acknowledgment of his candour and humanity. The same author's novel 'Sir Launcelot Greaves' contains a character, Mr. Justice Gobble, 'who, in the exercise of his authority, committed a thousand acts of cruelty and injustice against the poor, who were unable to call him to proper account.'

But if the judges of the last century were, as we have seen, open to bribery and corruption, juries were even more so. The issue of the 'London Evening Post' for April 2, 1774, informs its readers that in all Crown cases, special juries in the county of Middlesex 'are allowed an elegant dinner at Appleby's, and five guineas a man, if a verdict be given for the Crown or Government, otherwise they pay their own expenses.'

The thief-takers were a class of men who were employed to watch the movements and operations of thieves, and as long as they thought proper winked at their practices. But when fully satisfied that they ought to do so no longer they captured a thief or a highwayman, and received as 'blood-money' sometimes as much as 40*l.* It was the business of these individuals in the exercise of their profession to combine the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove—and to maintain a system of espionage and an acquaintance with thieves, in order to bring them at last under the arm of the law. How very profitable a calling that of a 'thief-taker' was in the last century is evident from the confession of James Townsend, a celebrated Bow Street officer, or 'runner,' as he was called, given before the Committee of the House of Commons on the police of the metropolis in June 1816. 'I remember in 1783, when Serjeant Adair was recorder, there were *forty* hung at two executions.' In the early part of the eighteenth century, the man who acted as general thief-taker for London and its environs was the notorious Jonathan Wild, who seems to have effected an astonishing number of captures. Harris, in his 'Life of Lord Hardwicke,' quotes a paragraph from a journal of

May 23, 1724, in which it is stated that Wild had succeeded in apprehending a gang of about one hundred persons in Southwark on suspicion of committing robberies on the highway, and that most of them were committed to the county gaol. But too much cunning invariably overreaches itself, and in February 1725 Jonathan Wild, who had been instrumental in sending such numbers to Newgate, was sent there himself for returning stolen goods to their rightful owner without prosecuting the persons who committed the theft—a charge upon which he was subsequently sentenced to death.

It was certainly not without reason that an eminent modern writer branded the capital and ten miles round, as it existed in the eighteenth century, with the title of the 'City of the Gallows,' for never was a city more completely supplied with that hideous instrument of punishment. No matter by what approach the stranger then entered London, he had the fact of the stringent severity of English criminal law most painfully impressed upon him by a sight of the gallows. If he entered the metropolis by its northern suburbs he would have passed Finchley Common, and have beheld not one, but perhaps five or six gibbets standing at a short distance from each other. If he travelled outside or inside a stage-coach that ran through the western quarter of the metropolis to Holborn or Piccadilly he passed within sight of the notorious gallows at Tyburn. If, hailing from some foreign shore, he sailed up the River Thames to the port of London, his gaze would have been certain to have fallen on some of the skeletons of those who had paid with their lives the penalty of mutiny or piracy on the high seas, suspended in chains from numerous gibbets erected in the marshes below Purfleet on the Essex side and Woolwich on the other. If he traversed on foot any of the numerous heaths or commons in the vicinity of the metropolis, he would, unless possessed of unusually strong nerves, never fail to be terrified by the sudden creaking and clanking of the chains in which the corpse of some gibbeted highwayman or foot-pad was slowly rotting away.[1] The only cure for crime in which

[1] See Archenholz, *Picture of England*, p. 12.

the judges and penal legislators of the eighteenth century reposed any faith at all was the gallows, and nothing but the gallows.

Processions of criminals to Tyburn were constantly to be witnessed, and were witnessed, too, all along their route, which was what is the modern Oxford Street, by crowds of spectators, who regarded them in the light of festivals. Awful spectacles they must have been! Hogarth, who allowed very little to escape his notice and drew his pictures from the realities of life which came under his own observation, has skilfully portrayed the scene of a Tyburn execution in one of his series of pictures contrasting 'Industry and Idleness.' The place of execution was variable. In Roque and Pines' 'Plans of the Cities of London and Westminster and the Borough of Southwark,' published in 1747, the Tyburn gallows is depicted as a triangular structure standing in the entrance of the Edgware Road. Cunningham believed that it stood on the site of Connaught Place, though the house, now No. 49 Connaught Square, it is said, occupies the spot—the space adjacent being used for the interment of bodies. Prior to 1758, when they were demolished by the rabble, there seem to have existed a number of raised galleries, in which places were let to those who desired to view the executions by a female pew-opener known as 'Mammy Douglas,' who kept the key of them. In Hogarth's picture, the gallows is represented as consisting of three tall upright posts, connected by spars at the top, and forming a triangle, upon which the executioner lies stretched at full length smoking his pipe. Towards this gallows the procession, attended by the guards, is forcing its way through a seething mass of spectators. The principal object in the procession is the executioner's cart containing the manacled criminal, whom the chaplain or ordinary of the prison which he has just quitted is earnestly exhorting to repentance.

Henry Fielding, the novelist, who was an acting magistrate for the county of Middlesex and for the city and liberties of Westminster, was one among the first to draw attention to the fact, that the frequency of public executions not only exercised no deterrent effect upon crime, but actually became associated

in the popular mind with ideas of pride and glory rather than with those of shame and dishonour.

The day appointed by law for the thief's shame (wrote he in his 'Inquiry into the increase of Robbers'), is the day of glory in his own opinion. His procession to Tyburn and his last moments there are all triumphant; attended with the compassion of the meek and tender-hearted, and with the applause, admiration, and envy of all the bold and hardened. His behaviour in his present condition, not the crimes, how atrocious soever, which brought him to it, is the subject of contemplation. And if he hath sense enough to temper his boldness with any degree of decency, his death is spoken of by many with honour, by most with pity, and by all with approbation.[1]

A criminal, before he made his exit from the world, was considered as a fit and proper subject for exhibition. This is forcibly illustrated in a newspaper paragraph cited by Harris in his 'Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke' :—'Nov. 7.—Nothing contributes so much to the entertainment of the town at present as the adventures of the famous housebreaker and gaol breaker John Sheppard. 'Tis thought the keepers of Newgate have got above 200*l.* already, by the crowds of people who flock daily to see Sheppard.' Nor was it considered unseemly for leaders of fashionable society to bandy compliments with notorious criminals. Writing from Strawberry Hill under date of Aug. 2, 1750, to his friend, Sir H. Mann, Walpole says :—

I have been in town for a day or two, and heard no conversation but about McLean, a fashionable highwayman who is just taken, and who robbed me among others, as Lord Eglinton, Sir Thomas Robinson of Vienna, Mrs. Talbot, &c. He took an odd booty from the Scotch Earl, a blunderbuss, which lies very formidably upon the justices' table. He was taken by selling a laced waistcoat to a pawnbroker, who happened to carry it to the very man who had just lost the lace. His history is very particular, for he confesses everything, and is so little of a hero that he cries and begs, and I believe if Lord Eglinton had been in any luck, might have been robbed of his own blunderbuss. His father was an Irish Dean; his brother is a Calvinist minister in great esteem at the Hague. He himself was a grocer (in Welbeck Street), but losing a wife that he loved extremely about two years ago, and by whom he has one little girl, he quitted his business with two hundred pounds in his pocket, which he soon spent, and then took to the

[1] *Enquiry, &c.*, sect. xi. p. 121.

road with only one companion, Plunket, a journeyman apothecary, *my other friend*, whom he has impeached, but who is not taken. [1]

In the next letter he says, '*My friend McLean* is still the fashion: *have not I reason to call him my friend?* He says if the pistol had shot me, he had another for himself. Can I do less than say I will be hanged if he is?'[2] A considerable amount of liquor was consumed by most prisoners in gaol at this time. Readers of Fielding's novel, entitled 'The History of Jonathan Wild the Great,' will not readily forget that weird scene it contains, in which the Ordinary of Newgate prison justifies his preference for a bowl of punch instead of wine, on the ground that it is nowhere spoken against in Scripture, preparatory to favouring Jonathan with a discourse on the solemn topic of a future state of existence, which, so far from edifying him, sends him to sleep. Small cause for wonder then that the criminal lying under sentence of death viewed his fate with stoical indifference, or that he acted on the advice of the old maxim, 'Live and be merry, for to-morrow we die.' He was perfectly at liberty to order anything that he happened particularly to fancy or desire for his last supper, and the Ordinary of the prison was generally expected to be present and to partake of the repast, by way of keeping up his spirits and joviality until he had shuffled off the mortal coil. Several curious stories have been preserved concerning these suppers. One may be introduced here. Gilly Williams, in writing to his friend George Augustus Selwyn under date of Wednesday, June 29, 1763, says:—

I will tell you a Newgate anecdote which I had from a gentleman who called on P. Lewis the night before the execution, and heard one runner call to another and order a chicken boiled for Rice's supper, 'but,' says he, 'you need not be curious about the sauce, for he is to be hanged to-morrow!' 'That is true,' says the other, 'but the Ordinary sups with him, and you know he is a devil of a fellow for butter.'[3]

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[1] *Walpole's Letters*, ed. Cunningham, ii. 218.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 224.

[3] Jesse's *Selwyn*, i. 245; see also a letter from Doctor Forde to Jeremy Bentham, 1783, in the latter's *Works*, ed. Bowring.

When the destined day arrived, in accordance with a time-honoured custom, the friends and acquaintances of the criminals presented them from the steps of St. Sepulchre's church with huge nosegays of flowers, as tokens of their attachment before they quitted Newgate. As the procession wended its way along the *via dolorosa*, the occupants of the cart were either loudly cheered or execrated by the spectators, with whom the windows of the houses were crowded on both sides of the way. The poet Gay alludes to this in his 'Beggar's Opera,' wherein Polly, one of the characters, is made to say in reference to Captain Macheath, 'Methinks I see him already in the cart, sweeter and more lovely than the nosegay in his hand! I hear the crowd extolling his resolution and intrepidity! What volleys of sighs are sent from the windows of Holborn that so comely a youth should be brought to the sack.'[1] So, too, in Swift's description of the final scene in the career of clever Thomas Clinch, written in 1727, we are told that :—

> As clever Tom Clinch while the rabble was bawling,
> Rode stately through Holborn to die at his calling,
> His waistcoat, and stockings, and breeches were white,
> His cap had a new cherry ribbon to tie 't.
> The maids to the doors and the balconies ran,
> And said, 'Lack-a-day, he's a proper young man!'
> And as from the windows the ladies he spied,
> Like a beau in a box, he bowed low on each side.

Soame Jenyns's poem descriptive of a 'Modern Fine Lady,' written in 1750, contains this line : 'She weeps if but a hand some thief is hung,' to which is appended the following note : 'Some of the brightest eyes were at this time in tears for one Maclean, condemned for robbery on the highway.' When the melancholy cavalcade reached Holborn, it halted at a tavern that bore the sign of 'The Bowl,' which stood between the end of High Street and Hog Lane, St. Giles's, in order to allow the wretched malefactors to drink 'the parting cup,' a tankard of either spiced ale or wine, or liquor of a more potent nature, to judge from the frequent accounts of their being launched into eternity in a state of stupefaction. Proceeding along the high road to Oxford, the cart was driven beneath 'the

[1] Act. i. sc. 12, ed. 1728.

three-legged mare,' and, after the noose had been adjusted, was driven quickly away by the hangman, leaving the malefactor suspended. Long after the scene of the public execution had been transferred to Newgate, the iron balconies whence the Sheriffs were accustomed to watch the executions were still visible on a house at the corner of Bryanston Street and the Edgware Road.

Lively indeed were some of the scenes enacted at the Tyburn executions. Under date of July 21, 1735, it is recorded that on

> Monday: Five condemned malefactors were executed at Tyburn—viz., Kiffe and Wilson for footpadding, in the first cart; Macdonald and Martin, *alias* Pup's Nose, for horse-stealing, in the second cart; and Morperth for footpadding, in a coach. The two in the second cart behaved very audaciously, calling out to the populace and laughing aloud several times, though it cannot be said they were in liquor, the order of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen having been strictly observed by the keepers.

This paragraph was evidently written some time after the Court of Aldermen of the City of London had issued strict orders to tavern-keepers against supplying criminals with spirituous liquors while proceeding on their way to execution.

> Seven malefactors (says a paragraph in the number of the same magazine for the month of September, 1735, under date of the 22nd) were executed at Tyburn—namely, William Lewis, Patrick Gaffney, Edward Togwell, Peter Matthews, Isaac Dennis, and William Phillips, *alias* Clark. They all behaved decently, and with seeming penitence, except Lewis and Hooper, who tossed up their shoes among the populace as soon as they got into the cart, and used several idle expressions.

Criminals considered it a mark of reproach to die with their shoes on. And in the contemporary songs and ballads this always meant that the person of whom it is spoken should die by the hands of the hangman. It is worthy of note that criminals were fond of proceeding to the Tyburn gallows arrayed in fine and gaudy apparel. It is stated by Thomas Gent, the York printer, in his 'Autobiography,' that in 1719 he witnessed the execution in London of John Matthews, a young printer, for high treason. 'I beheld him drawn on a sledge,' he says, 'as I stood near St. Sepulchre's Church: his clothes were ex-

ceedingly neat, the lining of his coat of a rich Persian silk, and every other thing as befitted a gent.'[1] According to the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' the unfortunate Charles Ratcliffe (Lord Derwentwater), who suffered decapitation on Tower Hill on December 8, 1746, was attired in scarlet, faced with black velvet, trimmed with gold, a gold-laced waistcoat, and a white feather in his hat. Seven years later—viz., on Thursday, June 7, 1753—Dr. Charles Archibald Cameron was executed at Tyburn for treason, wearing 'a light-coloured coat, red waistcoat and breeches, and a new bag wig.' Gilly Williams, writing to George Selwyn from White's, under date of Friday, Jan. 11, 1765, tells him that 'Harrington's man was hanged last Wednesday. The dog died game, went in the cart in a blue-and-gold frock, and, as an emblem of innocence, had a white cockade in his hat.'[2] When, in 1774, John Rann (commonly called 'Sixteen-Stringed Jack'), who had been coachman to Lord Sandwich, proceeded to execution, on November 30, at Tyburn, for robbing Dr. William Bell, chaplain to the Princess Amelia, of eighteenpence in money and his watch, in Gunnersbury Lane, he wore, according to one who saw him in the Oxford Road, 'a bright, pea-green coat, with an immense nosegay in the buttonhole which had been presented to him at St. Sepulchre's steps; and his nankeen small-clothes were tied with sixteen strings at each knee.'[3]

During the year 1752, murders became of such frequent occurrence that Parliament passed an Act decreeing that all criminals should be executed on the day after sentence had been passed upon them, and enjoining that their bodies should be sent in as quickly as possible to Barber-Surgeons' Hall, in the Old Bailey, in order that they might be dissected.[4] 'It is shocking to think what a shambles this country is grown,' wrote Walpole during the course of this year. 'Seventeen were executed this morning, after having murdered the turnkey on Friday night and almost forced open Newgate.'[5]

[1] *Autob.* p. 91. [2] Jesse's *Selwyn*, i. 354, 355.
[3] J. T. Smith, *Book for a Rainy Day*, ed. 1861, p. 29; *Nollekens and his Times*, i. 23.
[4] Grosley, *Observations on England*, ii. 142.
[5] *Walpole's Letters*, ed. Cunningham, ii. 281.

Still, in spite of this stringent severity of punishment, there was not the slightest diminution in crime, as is evident from the following paragraph which appeared in the 'Annual Register,' under date of August 24, 1763: 'Since the middle of July, near one hundred and fifty persons have been committed to New Prison and Clerkenwell, for robberies and capital offences.'

It is positively depressing to turn over the pages of such records of the times as the 'Annual Register,' the 'Gentleman's,' the 'London,' and the 'European' Magazines, and there to read of the holocausts of victims who were weekly offered to Moloch for offences which in these merciful days would be atoned for by a few months' imprisonment with hard labour at the very most. Here are some samples:—

In 1750:—Executed at Tyburn, July 6, Elizabeth Banks, for stripping a child; Catherine Conway, for forging a seaman's ticket; and Margaret Harvey, for robbing her master. They were all drunk, contrary to an express order of the Court of Aldermen against serving them with strong liquors.

The Historical Chronicle of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' for April, 1754, records that on the first day of that month

Six malefactors were executed at Tyburn, pursuant to their sentence, and their bodies delivered to their friends. August 5: James Cobley and Mary Smith were executed at Tyburn. December 6: Three malefactors under sentence of death were executed at Tyburn. On Monday, 4th, 1754, twelve malefactors were executed at Tyburn —viz., Dennis Neale, John Mason, John Welsh, Robert Keys, Grace Grannet, and Joshua Kidden, for divers highway robberies, John Smith and William Ford, for horse-stealing; Richard Hutton, for returning from transportation; Daniel Wood, for sheep-stealing; Thomas Burnard and William Jenks, for burglaries.

In 1780, large numbers were executed at Tyburn for participating in the notorious 'No Popery' Riots of that year. Even with juvenile offenders the law was suffered to take its course. The poet Rogers states that he well recollected seeing a whole cartful of young girls, attired in dresses of various colours, on their way to be executed at Tyburn, on indictment of having been concerned in the burning of some house during those riots.[1]

Whatever opinions may have been held on the subject of

[1] *Table Talk of S. Rogers*, p. 184.

capital punishment, no doubts seem to have been entertained as to the gross impropriety of public executions. Our eighteenth-century forefathers could never see that in the parade attendant upon a public execution there was something which not only varnished disgrace, but had a tendency to dazzle and even to captivate debased minds. A Scotch divine who visited London between the years 1764 and 1769 witnessed the execution of two criminals at Tyburn, and this is what he says respecting it :—

> Among the immense multitude of spectators accommodated according to their rank and payment—some at windows, some upon carts, thousands standing and jostling one another on the surrounding fields—my conviction is that, in a moral view, a great number were made worse instead of better, by the awful spectacle. Of the ragamuffin class a large proportion were gratified by the sight ; and within my hearing many expressed their admiration of the fortitude, as they termed the hardness and stupidity, of one of the sufferers. 'Well done, little coiner!' 'What a brave fellow he is!' with many other expressions of gross perverted applause, were repeated, both on the spot and on the return through Oxford Road.[1]

An execution-day at Tyburn was considered, to all intents and purposes, by the lower classes, as a holiday. Tyburn Fair was one of the designations by which a day of execution was known. A 'hanging-match' was another.[2] The manufactories and workshops were deserted at an early hour, and parties were formed at the coffee-houses and taverns among the fine gentlemen who frequented them, on the previous day. In George Augustus Selwyn, a celebrated wit, in Thomas Warton, in the Duke of Montague, and other noblemen, and in many men of great parts, the passion was strong for beholding such spectacles. At an early hour on the morning of an execution-day, all the intending spectators met at the various rendezvous named the night preceding. Angelo says that it was quite common throughout the whole metropolis for master coachmakers, framemakers, tailors, shoemakers, and others, when undertaking to complete orders within a given time, to bear in mind to observe to their customers, with reference to a certain date, 'Oh, *that* will be a hanging-day, and my men will not be at work.'

[1] Somerville, *My Own Life and Times*, p. 161.
[2] *Place MSS. Brit. Mus. Add. MSS.*, 27826.

Those of the lower grade who were determined to lose nothing of the sight from post to finish congregated as soon as it was light outside the felons' gate at Newgate to see the malefactors emerge thence and receive their nosegays at St. Sepulchre's, and gloried in their prowess in keeping their stations behind the cart in which the criminals were seated, through the crowd, thence to the place of execution. Others appeared at various stations, and fell into the ranks according to convenience; so that by the time the cavalcade reached St. Giles's the throng was occasionally so great as to entirely fill Oxford Street from house to house on either side, while within half a mile of Tyburn the pressure became insufferable. The Old Bailey, Newgate Street, from St. Sepulchre's Church, Snow Hill, and Holborn, as high as Furnival's Inn, on some of these occasions were filled with one dense mass of spectators.[1]

Malefactors of respectability (as in the case of the two Pereaus, executed in 1776; Dr. Dodd, in 1777; and William Retland, in 1783) were allowed to travel from Newgate to Tyburn in mourning-coaches, with a hearse containing the coffin to receive the body of the malefactor going on before. Around the gallows at Tyburn there were placed a number of boxes, or 'Mother Proctor's pews,' as they were called, extensive temporary erections of seats in tiers, which were raised upon a plot of ground belonging to the widow of a cowkeeper, named Proctor, who let them out to spectators at so many shillings per head, according to the position of the applicants and the consequence of the criminal. Angelo states that at the execution of Earl Ferrers, in 1766, this woman received for her sittings a sum amounting to more than 500*l.*[2]

Criminals who bore their fate with indifference or bravado were invariably applauded, and their friends would await their coming in different places, some holding a pot of beer in their hands, others a measure of gin, to give them, for which purpose the carts occasionally halted. Others threw oranges and apples to them. Piemen and sellers of gingerbread nuts bawled lustily about the streets. Songs and ballads commemorating the lives and deeds of highwaymen and thieves were sung and vended at every street corner from Holborn to Oxford Street. Carts were placed all along the middle of the road,

[1] Angelo's *Reminiscences*, ii. 474, 475.
[2] *Ibid.* i. 468.

and the curious paid a trifle for permission to sit or stand in them to see the culprits pass.[1]

Under date of Oct. 18, 1781, the journal of Samuel Curwen contains this record : 'Thirteen criminals executed at Tyburn—a melancholy consideration that robberies have of late greatly increased, as indeed has thieving of all kinds in the metropolis.'[2]

The 'Morning Herald' for Jan. 9, 1782, records :—

Yesterday were executed at Tyburn, pursuant to their sentence, the following malefactors capitally convicted in last October and December sessions : John Putterell, for robbing Alexander Catmur, on the highway near Shepherd's Bush, of a watch and some money ; John Fowler and John Harford, for robbing Mr. Allen, on the highway, of 15 guineas ; James Wilson, for a burglary in the dwelling-house of Mr. Young, of Ludgate Street ; and Walter Townsend, for robbing Mr. Sweet Hart of a silver watch in Clerkenwell Bridewell. Their deportment was very penitent, and every way becoming their unhappy condition.

The issue of the 'London Evening Post' for the month of October, 1782, contains the following appalling list of malefactors who had been executed at Tyburn on the day preceding :—

Yesterday morning, about nine o'clock, the following malefactors were brought out of Newgate and carried to Tyburn in three carts, where they were executed according to their sentences—viz., Henry Berthand, for feloniously personating one Mark Groves, the proprietor of 100*l.* Three per Cent. annuities, and transferring the same as if he was the real owner thereof ; William Jones, *alias* Filch, *alias* Parker, for stealing, in a warehouse in the Castle and Falcon in Aldersgate Street, a deal box containing a quantity of haberdashery goods ; Peter Ferrier, accomplice with Charles Kelly, executed for burglary in the house of Mrs. Pollard, in Great Queen Street; William Odern, for robbing Elizabeth Burrell and Martha Crowten in Spitalfields ; Charles Woollett, for robbing Bernard John Cheale, on the highway, of a metal watch; John Graham, for feloniously altering the principal sum of a bank-note of fifteen pounds so as to make the same appear to be a bank-note of fifty pounds, with intent to defraud Christopher Alderson ; Charlotte Goodall and John Edmonds, for stealing, in the dwelling-house of Mrs. Fortescue, at Tottenham, where she lived as servant, a great quantity of plate, linen, &c. ; Thomas Cludenboul, for assaulting Robert Chilton on the highway, and robbing him of a gold watch ; John Weatherley and John Lafee, for feloniously and treasonably

[1] *Personal Testimony of Francis Place, Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27826.
[2] *Letters and Journal*, p. 324.

coining and counterfeiting the silver moneys of the realm called shillings and sixpences. They all behaved very penitent.

Again :—

This day fifteen of the malefactors on whom sentence of death had been pronounced in April last were executed on the scaffold erected for that purpose before Newgate.[1]

The brutal and demoralising effect produced by public executions was enhanced in cases of high treason by the statute enacting that before the offender was beheaded, he should be half hanged, and that his entrails should be drawn out of his body and burnt before his very eyes. This shocking punishment was actually meted out to eight officers belonging to the Manchester regiment of volunteers, who had held commissions in the rebel army of the Young Pretender in 1745, on Kennington Common in 1746, the amiable Captain James Dawson (the subject of Shenstone's song 'Jemmy Dawson') being among the number. In these more enlightened days, when the last gasp of breath has departed out of the body of a wretch condemned to part with his life, his body is buried in peace, and the remembrance of his evil doings alone lives after him. Upon this particular point, as upon many others, our eighteenth-century forefathers entertained widely different notions. In their eyes the mere business of hanging, in cases of treason, was but the preliminary stage of the executioner's task : the second, and by far the most important, stage consisted in mauling, tearing, lacerating, quartering, and, in fact, heaping every conceivable insult upon the poor lifeless corpse. A short illustration will easily explain this. On Saturday July 14, 1781, the sessions at the Old Bailey, which had begun on the 11th, terminated with the result that sixteen persons received sentence of death. Among the number was M. Francis Henry de la Motte, who had been convicted of carrying on a treasonable correspondence with the enemies of England. Accordingly, on Friday, July 27, he was conveyed from the Tower to Newgate, and thence to Tyburn, when what transpired it may be permitted to a writer in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' to tell :—

[1] *Gent.'s Mag.* 1784, i. 474.

Upon his arrival at the place of execution he was immediately removed from the sledge into a cart, which was drawn under the gallows. He continued therein about two minutes, which he seemed to employ in fervent devotion; when, bowing respectfully twice to the Sheriffs, he turned to the executioner and desired him to perform his office immediately. After hanging 57 minutes the body was cut down and laid on the block, when (the fire being previously kindled) the executioner severed the head from the trunk, and making an incision from his breast, took out the heart, which, after a slight exposure, was committed to the flames. The body was after this, being first slightly scored, together with the head, put into a very handsome coffin, and delivered to an attendant undertaker for interment.[1]

On June 7, 1798, a man named James O'Coigly (*alias* James Quigley, *alias* James John Fivey), who had been convicted of high treason at Maidstone, was hanged on Penningdon Heath, in that neighbourhood, and after his body had hung about ten minutes, it was beheaded, and immediately interred beneath the gallows, the rest of the sentence having been remitted. When the present century was eleven years old, the humane and far-seeing Sir Samuel Romilly ventured to introduce a Bill into Parliament aimed at annulling the old Acts which ordered the utterly revolting mutilation of the bodies of traitors agreeable to a sentence expressed in the most barbarous jargon. The Bill being thrown out, Romilly had the satisfaction of recording that 'the Ministers had the glory of having preserved the British law, by which it was ordained that the heart and bowels of a man convicted of treason should be torn out of his body whilst yet alive.' A year later the Legislature was of a different way of thinking.

The bodies of those who were hanged for murder were sometimes formally handed over to the anatomists, after the hangman had divested them of their clothing, on the scene of the execution, for dissection in public. In the early part of the

[1] *Gent.'s Mag.* 1781, p. 342. It is a curious and interesting fact that in 1775 the large house opposite Stratford Place was the last, or nearly the last, decently-sized one in what is now Oxford Street. A lady who died in 1847, aged ninety-seven, told the present Earl of Malmesbury that she well recollected standing at one of the first-floor windows of that house, which was then occupied by George Shakespear, builder to George III., and seeing the brothers Perreau, convicted of forgery, being drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn for execution.

century such spectacles could be witnessed at Barber-Surgeons' Hall; in the latter part of the century they were generally taken to Hicks's Hall. One of these dissecting scenes has been depicted with minute fidelity by William Hogarth, in his series of pictures representing the 'Four Stages of Cruelty.'

A paragraph in the 'Daily Advertiser' for April 21, 1779, states that

> Yesterday the body of Mr. Hackman (Rector of Wiverton, in Norfolk, a divine who had been executed for the murder of the unfortunate Miss Ray) was exposed to public view at Surgeons' Hall, Old Bailey. Soon after the doors were opened, so great a crowd was assembled that no genteel person attempted to gain admittance, as it was observed that caps, cardinals, gowns, wigs, hats, &c., were destroyed without regard to age, sex, or distinction. In the afternoon the crowd was less, in consequence of which several persons of no mean appearance thought it a good opportunity to satisfy their curiosity; but when they got upon the staircase leading to the theatre (which was darkness visible) they found themselves *genteelly* complimented with a shower (supposed to be prepared on the occasion), issued from an instrument conducted by some person on the staircase.

Among the 'persons of no mean appearance' who satisfied their morbid curiosity on this occasion was the witty Dr. John Warner, Rector of Stourton, in Wiltshire, who, writing to his friend the celebrated George Augustus Selwyn, on the following day, said: 'Mr. Hackman has been tried, condemned, and executed, and is now a fine corpse at Surgeons' Hall, where I saw him yesterday—a genteel, well-made young fellow of four-and-twenty. There has been a deal of butchery in the case.'[1]

It should be mentioned that the heads of dead traitors were exhibited during the first half of the eighteenth century on Temple Bar, the only remaining gate of the city of London. The last heads which were thus exposed were those of some of the insurgents of the 'Forty-five'; and long after the century had closed, the eye of the passer-by was greeted by a sight of one of the iron poles or spikes above the gate upon which the heads of traitors were commonly stuck. It often happened that the heads which were exposed in this revolting manner were allowed to bleach for years in the sun and rain, until the wind hurled them into the footway. John Nichols, in his

[1] Jesse's *Selwyn*, iv. 96.

'Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century,' states that this actually happened to the head of Councillor Layer, who was executed for high treason at Tyburn, on May 17, 1723, the head being picked up by an eminent attorney named Pearce, resident in the vicinity.[1]

If there were no friends to claim them, or if they were not despatched to the anatomist's dissecting-room, the bodies of criminals were suspended in chains near the scene of the murder or the robbery, as the case might happen to be. Thus, on January 19, 1748, 'several men concerned in the murder of a man were executed at Chichester. One of them was afterwards hung in chains on the Portsmouth Road; another on Rook's Hill, near Chichester; two at Chelsea Hill, where they were long to be seen at a great distance.'[2] So late as 1799, the 'Annual Register' for that year records of a notorious criminal named Haines that he was hanged in chains on Hounslow Heath, between the two roads.

Before the invention of the drop, it not unfrequently happened that the death of a criminal took place very slowly; and several well-authenticated instances remain on record all tending to prove that vitality was re-kindled after the bodies had been cut down from the gallows. At Oxford at that time there was still in force a statute whereby the University reader in anatomy was empowered to demand the body or bodies of persons who were executed within twenty miles of that city. In the closing years of the century, there was a tradition familiar in the mouths of the townspeople, which ran to the effect that the body of a woman named Ann Green, who had been executed for the murder of her child, was cut down, and carried, according to the usual custom, to the anatomy school in Christ Church, to form the subject of a lecture. When the corpse was unpacked, it was observed to display signs of vitality, and, under the care and skill of the anatomy reader and his assistant, was restored once more to life.[3] A story somewhat

[1] *Literary Anecdotes*, v. 498.

[2] *State Trials*, xviii. 1116; see also *Gent.'s Mag.* 1760, pp. 486, 491.

[3] Cox's *Recollections of Oxford*, *infra* 1796, p. 21. See also the *Memoirs of James Smith*, p. 186; Brasbridge's *Fruits of Experience*, p. 272; and Brayley's *Londiniana*, ii. 33–7.

similar is told of the famous surgeon John Hunter. The body of a malefactor who had been executed at Newgate arrived one day at his chamber, and, under the operation of his knife, revived. Regarding the anatomist as his preserver, the criminal periodically demanded pecuniary assistance, which became at last a very severe tax upon Hunter's pocket. After a time, the Nemesis suddenly disappeared, and Hunter neither saw nor heard anything more of him until one day he received a subject whom he at once recognised as his late tormentor, who had been a second time executed. The story does not say that the anatomist repeated his former experiment.

An execution in town and country at that period invariably occasioned a considerable sale of those extraordinary publications known as 'last dying speeches and confessions,' which were usually vamped up for the occasion, either by hack-writers or for enterprising printers by the Ordinary of Newgate on confessions which he extorted, or professed to extort, from the criminals whom he attended. Thomas Gent, a printer in the city of York, honestly confesses, in his 'Autobiography,' that on the 'few dying words' uttered by Councillor Layer just before his execution, in 1723, he 'formed observations in the nature of a large speech, and had a run of sale for about three days successively, which obliged him to keep in his own apartments, the unruly hawkers being ready to pull his press in pieces for the goods.'[1] Francis Place, writing from personal knowledge of the dying speeches current in the latter half of the eighteenth century, says that so morbid was the desire for confessions that every ragged man, woman, and child bawled such memorials about the streets of London. Some blew horns as they announced them, and kept up a perpetual clamour during the morning, and, indeed, till the middle of the afternoon. Such speeches he says all contained the same form of words, were generally printed before the execution took place, and were often cried in different parts of the town some hours preceding the time at which the criminals were actually executed. Place further states that the sale of speeches at a halfpenny each must have been very

[1] *Life of Thomas Gent*, ed. 1832, p. 140.

great, as the number of those who hawked them about the streets was enormous, and that posterity can form no conception either of their number or of the discordant chant and noise which they made. Their number was, indeed, so great that, in going along the streets, there was neither cessation nor interval when the ear was relieved from the sound of their voices.[1]

Tyburn was not the only place for executions. Similar sights might be witnessed by those that cared—and who was there at this time that did not care for such spectacles?—at Execution Dock at Wapping, in the East-end of London, where pirates, freebooters, and buccaneers were hanged.

On Monday morning (runs a paragraph in the 'Public Advertiser' for Wednesday, January 6, 1790), at a quarter past nine, the High Marshal of the High Court of Admiralty, with his proper officers, went to Newgate to demand the five pirates. The Under-Sheriffs were both of them ready to receive him. Their devotional duties and every other necessary business preparative to the melancholy occasion having been finished, they were in a few minutes brought out at the felon door, and put into two carts. First Brett, the Dover pirate, and the two pirates of the 'Guinea-man.' Second cart, Clark, the mate of the Yarmouth ship, and Hobbins, of the same vessel. The procession then began. 1st, An officer of the Admiralty Court on horseback, having on his shoulder the silver oar, with pistols in the housings; the saddle-cloth embroidered with the anchor. 2nd, The two Under-Sheriffs. 3rd, An officer in naval uniform, with his sword drawn, on horseback, saddle-cloth embroidered as before. 4th, Criminals, in two carts, which were not covered with black cloth as usual; in the first cart was the executioner, with a drawn hanger. 5th, In a coach, John Cricket, Esq., High Marshal, and with him the Rev. Mr. Villette. In this manner they proceeded to Execution Dock, where they arrived at a quarter after eleven, when, after some time being spent in prayer, and singing the Sinner's Repentance, they were launched into eternity, among an amazing concourse of people.

Criminals condemned to suffer at Execution Dock were conveyed thither from Newgate in a car along with the Ordinary, a coffin, and a silver oar. They were placed on a scaffold erected in such close proximity to the riverside that their feet, when their bodies had been suspended, were washed by the tide. After they had hung a sufficiently long time, they were taken down and subsequently suspended in chains on one of the numerous gibbets which lined the banks of the Thames, as will

[1] *Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27826.

be seen in Hogarth's picture of the 'Idle Apprentice Sent to Sea.' A paragraph in the March number of the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for 1735 records that on the 14th day of that month 'Williams, the pirate, was hanged at Execution Dock, and afterwards in chains at Bugsby's Hole near Blackwall.'

When a criminal committed suicide within the precincts of his cell—a matter of constant occurrence—a stake was driven through his body, which was afterwards buried under cover of darkness at the meeting of four roads. It is recorded that in 1755 a bookseller, named Barlow, who carried on business in Star Alley, Fenchurch Street, London, murdered one of his children, and then laid hands upon himself, inflicting such injuries that he died in the compter not many days afterwards. As soon as he was dead, his body was handed over to his friends, who caused it to be promptly taken away and interred. This reached the ears of the Lord Mayor, who instantly issued orders for it to be disinterred, stuck through with a stake, and thrust into a hole near a cross-road at the upper end of Moorfields.

The student of the manners and morals of the eighteenth century may look in vain for any signs of a revolt of the public conscience against public executions. It is conspicuous by its absence. As late as 1783 Dr. Johnson is found protesting against the intended discontinuance of the Tyburn processions. Boswell relates that one night in March, 1783, at the Literary Club, Dr. Johnson observed to Sir William Scott, 'The age is running mad after innovation, and all the business of the world is to be done in a new way: men are to be hanged in a new way; Tyburn itself is not safe from the fury of innovation.' Some one present hearing this remark ventured to argue that such a step would be a vast improvement. 'No, sir,' thundered the Sage of Fleet Street, 'it is *not* an improvement; they object that the old method drew together a number of spectators. Sir, executions are intended to draw spectators. If they do not draw spectators, they don't answer their purpose. The old method was most satisfactory to all parties: *the public was gratified by a procession; the criminal was supported by it.* Why is all this to be swept away?' The Laird of Auchinleck,

whose remarkable propensity for witnessing executions is too well known to need any comment here, complacently records that he expressed his perfect agreement upon this head with the oracle ; and for the benefit of posterity expresses his conviction that executions since the Tyburn procession had been abolished were not nearly so deterrent in effect as they had been before. At Exeter—to mention one provincial city—the number executed in August *alone* was twenty-one. Why were executions intended to draw spectators? it may well be asked. To excite within the breasts of those by whom they were witnessed the horror of committing crimes—an effect which Johnson and Boswell supposed was produced. But all sound reasoning, as well as experience, ought to have convinced every man in that age who was capable of understanding how mankind is influenced that public executions produced just the contrary effect. There is plenty of evidence tending to prove that they invariably increased the number of criminals. When 'the old method was most satisfactory to all parties—the public was gratified by a procession,' the public—or, rather, the whole vagabond population of London, all the thieves and evil-disposed persons, and some—a comparatively few—curious people made up the mob on these brutalising occasions ; and surely no procession, much less such a procession as that mentioned, should have been organised for a public of that description. Was the procession always gratifying to the tradespeople all the way from Newgate to Tyburn? Was it always gratifying to them to be obliged to close their shops, and to watch their houses and gardens, lest they were destroyed by people following in the train of the carts? Was the criminal always supported by the procession? The criminal who was frightened at his fate, or who was distressed from some other cause, was certainly not supported. He was tortured. But the criminal who 'died game,' as the phrase ran, was indeed supported by the procession, seeing that he was furnished with a favourable opportunity for making a display before his companions, and of encouraging others to become, or to continue in being, miscreants. That he was fortified by the procession, by the strong liquor, by the hearty grips of the hand, and by the appro-

bation of his conduct, is undoubtedly true ; but it is unquestionable that all this was attended by much evil. The truth is that the effect which Johnson commended was the very one that he ought to have condemned ; and how Boswell could describe the procession as solemn it is difficult to perceive, unless it contained elements of solemnity which were perceptible only to himself. Solemnity there was none, but of low merrymaking, of drunken revelry, and of unseemly behaviour there was enough and to spare, and the abolition of a spectacle so degrading, so revolting, so utterly out of all character, was the first premonitory symptom of the change that was coming over the more rational section of public men. It may be worth adding that in the same year as the conversation between Johnson and himself which Boswell has recorded—viz., 1783—fifty-one individuals were executed in the capital alone. Two years later the number had increased to ninety-seven. Strange, passing strange, that two men of sense and ability in the age in which they lived, such as Dr. Johnson and his worshipper unquestionably were, should have entertained notions on the subject of public executions so radically wrong-headed and absurd—strange that two men who ought to have known better should have gabbled on this subject with the vulgar garrulity of two old gossips. Strange as it seems, there were, no doubt, hundreds who entertained precisely the same views, hundreds who regarded the project as necessarily hopeless and quixotic, hundreds who contended that the spirit of the age was utterly opposed to such a reform, and who confidently predicted that the sequel would abundantly prove it to be so. Sir Samuel Romilly relates that while present at a dinner two years later, in company with John Wilkes and Mirabeau, the conversation turned upon the severity of the English criminal law, and the frequency of public executions. The member for Middlesex, we are told, 'defended the system with much wit and good humour, but with very bad arguments. He thought that the happiest results followed from the severities of our penal law. It accustomed men to a contempt of death, though it never held out to them any cruel spectacle ; and he thought that much of the courage of Englishmen, and of their

humanity too, might be traced to the nature of our capital punishments, and to these being so often exhibited to the people.'[1] That the same dread of innovation was shared by other legislators is evident from a passage of Romilly's 'Diary,' in which he states that while standing at the bar of the House of Commons, a young man, the brother of a peer, walked up to him and exclaimed, 'I am against your Bill—I am for hanging all.' 'I was confounded,' observes Romilly, 'and endeavouring to find out some excuse for him, I observed that I supposed he meant that, the certainty of punishment affording the only prospect of suppressing crimes, the laws, whatever they were, ought to be executed. "No, no," he said; "it is not that. There is no good done by mercy. They only get worse. I would hang them all up at once."' The days of Tyburn were however numbered, and the month of November, 1783, witnessed the last execution in that locality.[2]

In the voluminous published correspondence of the Right Hon. John Wilson Croker, who filled the office of Secretary to the Admiralty from 1809 to 1830, there will be found a letter dated November 8, 1843, bearing upon the drop, from Sir Peter Laurie :—

I believe (says he) that the first attempt at something like a drop in hanging criminals was at the execution of Lord Ferrers at Tyburn in 1760; but whether it did not work well or was considered too aristocratic a mode for common vagabonds, or was a patent mode —if patents existed in those days—it was not adopted as the general mode of execution till 1783, when ten felons were executed on November 9 in that year, for the first time in front of Newgate, on a new drop or scaffold hung with black. No execution upon the old mode took place in front of Newgate. The last person executed

[1] *Memoirs*, 3rd edit. i. 61.

[2] Sir Richard Phillips, who was born in London in 1768, and who attained very considerable eminence as a publisher long before the eighteenth century closed, states in his *Million of Facts* (ed. 1832, pp. 460–1) that between the years 1746 and 1756, 306 persons were executed in London alone. During the next seven years the number was 139, and in the following seven years it was 233, that being at the rate of thirty per annum. During the second ten years of the reign of George III.—that is to say, from 1770 until 1780—the capital punishments in London savoured of absolute butchery. Sir Richard states that at the drop of the Old Bailey the executions used to be likened to the suspension of pounds of candles, as many as fifteen or twenty being strung up at a time.

at Tyburn was John Austin, who suffered on Friday, November 7, 1783, for a robbery committed on John Spicer with very aggravating circumstances. The gallows used at Tyburn was purchased by a carpenter, who, having no sentiment in his composition, converted it into stands for beer-butts in the cellars of a public-house called the 'Carpenter's Arms,' in Adam Street. I imagine that the drop introduced and first used on December 9, 1783, must have been an experiment, as I find that on November 25, 1784, the Court of Aldermen 'referred it to the Committee for repairing the gaol of Newgate to inquire into the expense of a *platform* and bell used at the public execution of criminals.' The removal of the place of execution from Tyburn to Newgate was made at the instance of the sheriffs, Sir Barnard Turner and Thomas Skinner (1783), in consequence of the mischiefs which arose from the long parade of criminals from Newgate to Tyburn, and not from 'the fury of innovation,' as Dr. Johnson has it.[1]

For years afterwards the old stigma clung to Tyburn and the immediate neighbourhood, and survived even until a period within the memory of many persons who are still living.

It has been repeatedly asserted that the horrible statute of burning men in the hand, and that of publicly strangling and burning women for offences *contra bonos mores*, was never put into force during that period. One fact is very clear—that they who have committed themselves to such an assertion have never taken the trouble to consult for themselves the newspapers that were published during this period, or, if they have, they have consulted them to very little purpose. Evidence of the first punishment having been inflicted is supplied in the following paragraph quoted by Harris in his 'Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke':—'They write from Nottingham that at the assizes there two persons were burnt in the hand, one of them in such a manner that he lost above twelve ounces of blood in the court, for which the executioner was reprimanded; and the judge ordered the under-sheriff to send a surgeon to the gaol to take care of the man's hand, in which there is a hole to the very bone.'[2] That the second of these modes of punishment was also inflicted is proved beyond all reasonable doubt, first, by Harris, who, in his 'Life of Hardwicke,' quotes an instance of a woman suffering it for the murder of her husband at Lincoln,

[1] *The Croker Papers*, ed. Jennings, iii. 15–16.

[2] *Life of Hardwicke*, i. 166. See also *Annual Register*, 1777, p. 132.

from a journal of 1725 ; and secondly by such paragraphs as the following, extracted from the numbers of the 'London Magazine' for the months of July and August 1735 respectively :—'At the assizes at Northampton, Mary Fawson was condemned to be *burnt* for poisoning her husband.' Again :—'Among the persons capitally convicted at the assizes at Chelmsford are Herbert Hayns, one of Gregory's gang, who is to be hung in chains ; and a woman for poisoning her husband, to be *burnt*.' 'Mrs. Fawson was *burnt* at Northampton for poisoning her husband. Her behaviour in prison was with the utmost signs of contrition. She would not, to gratify people's curiosity, be unveiled to any. She confessed the justice of her sentence, and died with great composure of mind.'

Lord Bacon, when Solicitor-general, defined this punishment :—'In petie treason, the corperall punishment is by drawing on an hurdle, and hanging, and in a woman burning.' In 1776 'The Annals of Newgate' were published, written by the Rev. John Villette, Ordinary of the prison, which contains several notices of this punishment. In the month of May 1726, Catherine Hays was burnt for murdering her husband.

Catherine Hays being brought to the stake, was chained thereto with an iron chain running round her waist and under her arms, and a rope round her neck, which was drawn through a hole in the post ; then the faggots, light brushwood intermixed with straw, being piled all around her, the executioner put fire thereto in several places, which immediately blazing out, as soon as the same reached her she with her arms pushed down those which were before her, when she appeared in the middle of the flames as low as the waist, upon which the executioner got hold of the end of the cord which was round her neck and pulled it tight in order to strangle her, but the fire soon reached his hand and burned it, so that he was obliged to let it go again ; more faggots were immediately thrown upon her, and in about three or four hours she was reduced to ashes.[1]

The same horrible punishment was inflicted on Ann Mudd, aged 22, for causing the death of her husband by stabbing him, on Wednesday, June 29, 1737. Elizabeth Harwood (32), for the murder of her child, and Susannah Brown (67), for the murder of her husband, were, on December 21, 1739, both drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn, tied to a stake and burned.

[1] Villette's *Annals of Newgate*, i. 426.

Another instance of this barbarous practice is contained in the issue of 'Harrison's Derby and Nottingham Journal, or Midland Advertiser,' for September 23, 1779 :—

On Saturday two prisoners were capitally convicted at the Old Bailey for high treason, namely, Isabella Condon, for coining shillings in Nag's Head Yard, Bishopsgate Street. They will receive sentence to be drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution, the woman to be burnt, and the man to be hanged.

In 1773 Elizabeth Herring was burnt for counterfeiting silver coin, and in 1777 another woman, named Sarah Parker, who had been convicted of the same offence, was punished in like manner.[1]

There lies at this moment in Newgate (Sir W. Meredith is reported to have said in the House of Commons on May 13, 1777, in committee on a Bill creating a new capital felony) under sentence to be burnt alive, a girl just turned of fourteen ; at her master's bidding she had some whitewashed farthings belining her stays, on which the jury found her guilty as an accomplice with her master in the treason. The master was hanged last Wednesday ; and the faggots all lay ready—no reprieve came till just as the cart was setting out, and the girl would have been burnt alive on the same day had it not been for the humane but casual interference of Lord Weymouth.[2]

According to the issue of the 'Chelmsford Chronicle' for June 23, 1786, a wretched woman named Phoebe Harris, who had been convicted at the assizes for counterfeiting coin at the instigation of her husband, who, it appeared, was an old practitioner, was burnt in the open space before Newgate in the presence of about twenty thousand spectators. The report states that

About a quarter of an hour after the platform had dropped the female convicted was led by two officers of justice from Newgate to a stake fixed in the ground about midway between the scaffold and the pump. The stake was about eleven feet high, and near the top of it was inserted a curved piece of iron, to which the end of the halter was tied. The prisoner stood on a low stool, which, after the Ordinary had prayed with her a short time, being taken away, she was suspended by the neck (her feet being scarcely more than twelve or fourteen inches from the pavement). Soon after the signs of life had ceased two cartloads of faggots were placed round her and set on fire ; the flames presently burning the halter the

[1] *Annual Register* 1773, p. 131. [2] *Ibid.* 1777, p. 168.

convict fell a few inches, and was then sustained by an iron chain passed over her chest and affixed to the stake. Some scattered remains of the body were perceptible in the fire at half-past ten o'clock. The fire had not completely burned out at twelve o'clock.

The last occasion during the eighteenth century on which this sentence was carried into effect, so far as the capital is concerned, it is believed was on March 18, 1789, according to the 'Public Advertiser,' the victim being a wretched woman named Christian Murphy. In some accounts it is asserted that in this case the executioner did not completely effect the strangulation, and that, consequently, when the flames reached her at the stake she gave utterance to a loud shriek.

The old statute of *peine forte et dure*—better known, perhaps, as that of 'pressing to death,' left the way open for meting out cruel tortures to those criminals who in court 'stood mute,' or who contumaciously refused to plead 'Guilty,' or 'Not guilty,' to charges of petit treason, felony, or any of the capital crimes. John Chamberlayne, in his work entitled the 'Present State of Great Britain,' published in 1741, describes the mode in which 'pressing' was inflicted :—

> The person accused persisting in his contumacy (says he), is ordered to be sent back to the prison from whence he came, and there laid in some dark room upon the bare ground, his arms and legs drawn with cords fastened to the several quarters of the room; and then shall be laid upon his body iron and stone so much as he can bear or more; the next day he shall have three morsels of barley bread without drink, and the third day he shall have drink of the water next to the prison door, except it be running water, without bread, and this shall be his diet till he die.

While it is quite true that instances of the infliction of this punishment are of comparatively rare occurrence, it is also true that they are occasionally to be met with in the newspapers which were published during this period. Two highwaymen, Phillips and Spiggot, were pressed for standing mute in July 1720, and a man named Nathaniel Harris in December 1721.[1] Subjoined are two later records of the infliction of this punishment. The first is extracted from the issue of the 'London Magazine' for August 21, 1735, and runs thus :—

[1] *Place MSS. Brit. Mus. Add. MSS.* 27826.

At the assizes at Lewes, in Sussex, a man who pretended to be dumb and lame was indicted for a barbarous murder and robbery. He had been taken up on suspicion, several spots of blood and part of the goods being found upon him. When he was brought to the bar he would not speak or plead, though often urged to it, and the sentence to be inflicted on such as stand mute was read to him. Four or five persons in the court swore they had heard him speak, and the boy who was his accomplice, and apprehended, was there to be a witness against him; yet he continued mute. Whereupon he was carried back to Horsham Gaol, to be pressed to death if he would not plead. They laid on him first a hundredweight, then added a hundredweight more, and he still continued obstinate. They then added a hundredweight more, and then made it three hundred and fifty pounds; yet he would not speak. Then adding fifty pounds more he was just dead, having all the agonies of death upon him; then the executioner, who weighs about sixteen or seventeen stone, lay down upon the board which was over him, and, adding to the weight, killed him in an instant.

It never seems to have occurred to the writer of this paragraph that the victim of this hideous punishment was in reality one whose tongue had never been loosed, or that he was entirely guiltless of the charges imputed to him, and the scene, rivalling the atrocities of the Holy Inquisition, is related in the most matter-of-fact sort of manner, as if it were an every-day occurrence, and without one single remark on its cruel and barbarous character. The second record is extracted from the 'Universal Spectator,' No. 674, October 1741 :—

September 5. On Tuesday was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey, Henry Cook, the shoemaker of Stratford, for robbing Mr. Zachary on the highway. On Cook's refusing to plead there was a new press made, and fixed to the proper place in the Press Yard, there having been no person pressed since the famous Spigott the highwayman, which is about twenty years ago.

A very large number of offences at that time were punished by exposure in the pillory, one of the most barbarous of all the punishments of barbarous ages. This instrument, it is hardly necessary to say, took the form of a wooden frame or screen raised several feet from the ground, behind which the culprit stood supported upon a platform, his head and arms being thrust through holes in the screen so as to be exposed in front of it, and in this position he remained for a certain length of time,

usually assigned by the judge who passed the sentence.[1] Pillories stood in every important thoroughfare in the metropolis at this period—in Cheapside, in St. Paul's Churchyard, in Cornhill, and in the Poultry—and within them offenders enjoyed the privilege of standing, or rather of walking round on and in them, for the space of one hour, usually from twelve till one o'clock at noon, the common dinner-hour, and consequently at the time when the streets were crowded with people, who were allowed to hoot and pelt them to their hearts' content with such harmless missiles as sticks, stones, mud, turnips, rotten eggs, dead cats and dogs, and such like. Primarily the pillory had been intended *magis ad ludibrium et infamiam quam ad pœnam*—that is to say, more for the exposure of offenders to mockery and infamy than for corporal punishment; but so violent was the mob's treatment of unpopular individuals occasionally that instances are on record of deaths resulting from exposure in the pillory. An eminent lawyer, commenting upon this institution in 1769, observed :—

> It may well deserve the consideration of a judge who inflicts the punishment of pillory, as it becomes at present the great occasion of mobs and riots, whether it can be reconciled to the original intention of the law in the mode of punishment; and particularly if this riotous scene ends in the death of the criminal (as in the case of one Egan, in 1756), whether the judge is not accessory both to the riot and the murder.

Sir James Prior, in his 'Life of Edmund Burke,' cites another instance which occurred somewhere about 1780, on St. Margaret's Hill, Southwark. Publication of the details of this barbarous occurrence in the newspapers having arrested the attention of the great statesman, caused him to comment on its savage brutality from his seat in the House of Commons, conduct which the malice of the press rewarded by its virulent abuse. Prior quotes the account of the suffering from one of the journals, the name of which is not mentioned. Two men, it appears, were punished at the same time for the same offence :—

> One of them, being of short stature and remarkably short necked, could not reach the hole made for the admission of the head. The

[1] *Place MSS. Brit. Mus. Add. MSS.* 27826.

officers of justice nevertheless forced his head through the hole, and the poor wretch hung, rather than walked, as the pillory turned round. Previous to being put in he had deprecated the vengeance of the mob and begged for that mercy which in their exasperation at his crime, and their want of considering the consequences of their cruelty, they seemed very little to bestow. He soon grew black in the face, and the blood issued from his nostrils, his eyes, and his ears; the mob nevertheless attacked him with great fury. The officers, seeing his situation, opened the pillory, and the poor wretch fell down dead on the stand of the instrument. The other man was likewise so maimed and hurt by what was thrown at him that he lay there without hope of recovery.[1]

Burke's biographer also relates that five years afterwards, when he repeated the same remarks in the House of Commons, on a nearly similar occurrence in Bristol, which city he represented, the press reiterated its slanders, an occasion which led to the bringing of an action against the printer of the slanders.[2] When anyone was pilloried, the sheriff's duty required his presence to see the sentence duly carried out. The constables on these occasions were a numerous body, and formed a ring round the pillory to keep the mob at a distance. There were always a sufficiently large number of spectators to keep one another in countenance and to encourage the more debased to keep up the sport: nor was there ever any want of low-lived men and women, boys and girls, thieves and miscreants of every description, anxious to increase the misery of the wretch put up for their amusement, and to enjoy themselves in the exercise of their villanous propensities. Charing Cross was the most usual place for pillorying those who were sentenced to that punishment for offences committed in the metropolis on the north of the Thames and without the City of London. As it was always well known that such an exhibition was to take place at a certain time, a large mob invariably assembled, and of this a considerable portion consisted of the lowest vagabonds that St. Giles's and Tothill Fields could furnish, such hateful assemblages indeed probably never being collected even at 'hanging-matches.' Some of these people brought with them, on donkeys and in baskets, rotten eggs, which they procured from the egg warehouses, decayed cabbages,

[1] Prior, *Life of Burke*, p. 367. [2] *Ibid.* 368.

and the refuse of Covent Garden Market. The sport commenced by throwing mud and eggs from behind the constables at Jack Ketch immediately before he was prepared to quit the stage, when he had fixed the victims in the pillory: and the joke consisted in the embarrassment and hurry of the executioner to escape from the platform. As soon as the hangman had descended and the offenders began to move round, the constables permitted a number of the bystanders to pass between them into the open space around the pillory. The pelting then began, and continued without intermission. The poor creature's hands were so confined as to be useless to him, and the adhesive masses flung about clung to the pillory and his face, and rested on his head, until the quantity thus accumulated entirely obscured his visage, and either fell off in a mass by its own weight or suffocated him. Often and often was Jack Ketch obliged to mount the platform and to push the foul stuff from the heads of the men with a stick to save their lives during this process. The constables compelled those within the ring to refrain from pelting, but they could not always restrain those without, who continued to pelt away both at the occupants of the pillory and at the executioner. The unfortunate men were generally exhausted before the expiration of the hour they were doomed to walk on the pillory, and in some cases it became absolutely necessary to abridge the time to save their lives from destruction. Disgraceful as this punishment was, both to the Government and the nation, much as it tended to barbarise the people, greatly as it promoted every species of blackguardism and the increase of crime, it was considered an appropriate punishment for men who had uttered seditious words, or who were convicted of having written or published a libel against Church or State. It is difficult to conceive the existence of such enormities, much less to believe they were promoted by lawyers, judges, and what are usually termed respectable people. [1]

Far different was the treatment which popular heroes or idols experienced at the hands of the rabble. The appearance

[1] *Place, MSS. Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27826. See also Archenholz's *Picture of England*, p. 61; Curwen's *Journal*, p. 277.

of such persons in the pillory was the general signal for loud outbursts of cheering and applause, and for rough usage of those officers of the law whose unpleasant duty it was to be present. On such occasions, the 'martyrs,' or the idols, were not slow in converting the pillories into pulpits, to the best of their ability, and improving the occasion by the delivery of eloquent orations to the crowds who surged beneath. Several names of note occur among those who stood in the pillory at different times during the eighteenth century. Daniel Defoe, it may be remembered, was compelled to stand in the pillory for giving publication to his work entitled 'The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,' in 1702, voted a libel by the House of Commons, and after he had stood in it, he was carried to Newgate, where he wrote a hymn to the pillory, which he wittily styled

> A hieroglyphic State machine
> Condemned to punish fancy in.

Pope alludes to this circumstance in the 'Dunciad,' where he says,

> Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe.

Messrs. Curll and Mist, booksellers, of the City of London, were served in like manner for similar offences. Richard Nutt, the printer of the 'London Evening Post,' was pilloried at Charing Cross for giving publication to libel, and many others endured the same course of treatment. Perjury, libel, adulteration, and forgery were all punished, not only with flagellation through the streets, but with ear-nailing, nose-slitting, tongue, cheek, or forehead branding, with red-hot irons by the executioner, in addition to the pillory. Here is an account of a pillory scene extracted from the issue of 'Fog's Weekly Journal,' for June 12, 1731 :—

Thursday, Japhet Cook, *alias* Sir Peter Springer, who was some time since convicted of forging deeds of conveyance of two thousand acres of land belonging to Mr. Garbutt and his wife, lying in the parish of Claxton (? Clacton), in the county of Essex, was brought by the keeper of the King's Bench to Charing Cross, where he stood in the pillory from twelve till one, pursuant to his sentence. The time being near expired, he was sat on a chair in the pillory,

when the hangman, dressed like a butcher, came to him, and with a knife like a gardener's pruning-knife cut off his ears, and with a pair of scissors slit off both his nostrils, all which Cook bore with great patience ; but at the searing with a red-hot iron of his right nostril the pain was so violent that he got up from his chair ; his left nostril was not seared, so he went from the pillory bleeding.

Women were usually exempted from the ignominy and brutality of the pillory, but they were subjected to it sometimes, as in the case of a woman named Rosa Beach, who, it is recorded, in 1755 was placed *three* times in a pillory set up at the entrance to Hatton Garden for fortune-telling. In the course of the same year a man named Govers was exposed in the pillory near the Royal Exchange for practising frauds upon certain London tradesmen.

We come now to speak of prisons, or wild-beast dens—a term which, as applied to those in existence at that period, would be more—infinitely more—appropriate. The evils, abuses, anomalies, miseries, and abominations with which they teemed might in these days be reasonably doubted, were it not for the fact that authentic records are in existence to show what their condition really was.

Among the offences punishable by imprisonment at that time was debt, and therefore the debtors' prisons shall be first noticed. Under the law of creditor and debtor as it then existed, the former was legally enabled to gratify his vengeance at the expense of the latter by causing him to be imprisoned. That malicious creditors took every advantage of this it is almost superfluous to add, and consequently the Fleet, the Marshalsea, and the King's Bench Prison, which were the three London establishments in which insolvent debtors were confined, were for ever full of such people.

In the year 1729, an eminent London architect named Robert Castell, falling into difficulties, was arrested, and thrown into a sponging-house adjoining the Fleet Prison, presided over by Corbett, a nominee of the Warden, Thomas Bambridge. Subsequently he obtained what was known as 'the Liberty of the Rules ;' but, as he failed to keep pace with the warden's rapacity in the matter of fees, the inhuman wretch sent him back to Corbett's sponging-house, where the smallpox was

then raging, despite his entreaties to be removed somewhere else. The consequence was that he was soon laid prostrate by the dreadful scourge, and in a few days died, leaving a widow and family in terrible straits, and denouncing the warden in his last hours as guilty of murdering him.[1] Now it had happened that the hapless Castell had been visited in his affliction by Captain James Oglethorpe, who represented Haslemere in Parliament —a man whose 'strong benevolence of soul' was panegyrised by Pope—whose biography Dr. Samuel Johnson expressed his desire to write, and for whose kindly appreciation of his poem of 'London,' at a time when he was climbing by slow and toilsome steps the pathway to literary fame, the surly moralist never ceased to be grateful. He, having suspicions that Castell's death was attributable to the inhumanity of the Warden of the Fleet Prison, determined to do what in him lay to prevent the possibility of its recurrence. Nor was that all. Oglethorpe laid the case before Parliament, and had the satisfaction of being appointed chairman of a Committee, comprising fourteen members, instituted for the purpose of visiting the three London prisons for debtors. On Tuesday, February 27, 1729, the Committee paid its first visit to the dismal recesses of the Fleet Prison. The office of Warden of the Fleet was at that time held by an individual named Thomas Bambridge, who had purchased it from his predecessor, a man called John Huggins. Bambridge within the walls of the prison acted the part of a despot on a small scale—extorting exorbitant fees from all those who had the misfortune to fall into his clutches, oppressing and even loading them with irons when he failed to secure his ends. Among the debtors who were examined by the Committee was Sir William Rich, whom Bambridge had loaded with heavy irons for daring to dispute with him. The Committee discovered that the Fleet Prison was divided into two classes, known as the Common Side and the Master's Side; that the former contained three wards, tenanted in all by ninety-three persons, many of whom were compelled to lie upon the bare floor, through inability to provide a bed for themselves; that

[1] Wright's *Memoir of General James Oglethorpe*, p. 16.

in several rooms on the chapel stairs men and women, sick and ill, lay on the floor with not a rag to cover them ; that the warden, not satisfied with extracting large sums of money, had locked them in filthy cells in default of payment, had caused them to be manacled, and, when they died, had appropriated to his own use any effects of which they had been possessed ; and finally it proved that while pursuing this policy he had allowed several of his prisoners to escape—particularly a smuggler named Boyce—and that the twenty-six occupants of the three sponging-houses in the vicinity of the Fleet were forced to pay for their accommodation at the rate of two shillings per day.

Some of the illegal proceedings of this miscreant completely pass the understanding. Thomas Hogg stated that while walking by the door of the prison one day he stopped to bestow alms at the grating where the prisoners were permitted to stand and cry, 'Pray remember the poor debtors!' and that one of Bambridge's satellites, a man named Barme, seeing this, caught hold of him, and thrust him into Corbett's sponging-house, where he was detained for upwards of nine months.

Jacob Mendez Solas, a native of Portugal, was another witness who was examined by the Committee. This poor creature stated, in answer to their enquiries, that while passing the Fleet Prison one day, Bambridge called him into the lodge, caused him to be seized, bound hand and foot, and forced into Corbett's sponging-house. There he was detained for more than a week, at the expiration of which he was transferred to the strong room of the Master's Side. In that filthy sink, the wretched man was confined in manacles and shackles for nearly two months, and was released at length by the generosity of a friend—not, mark, to go forth into the world again, but, under the terror inspired by Bambridge, gratuitously to work for him.

Captain John Mackpheadris stated that until the bursting of the South Sea Bubble some years before had plunged him into distress and ruin, he was a wealthy London merchant Seven years later, through no fault of his own, he found him

self a prisoner in the Fleet, where he had suffered the most shameful degradations at the hands of the warden and his fiends incarnate—being at length thrown into a dungeon, where he lay without a bed, and loaded with irons so closely riveted that, in addition to suffering incessant torture, his legs mortified and his eyesight became impaired.

Captain Sinclair was another of the many victims of Bambridge's cruelty. He stated that he had been immured in a damp and loathsome dungeon until he had lost the use not only of his physical but also of his mental powers; and that when the warden discovered him to be in a dying condition, he had him removed to a room containing no furniture, there left him for four days without food, and prevented his friends from having any access to him.

It would require more space than here can be afforded to enumerate a tithe of the enormities that had been practised in that foul den. Of the instruments of torture which had been employed by the warden, it is enough to say that when they were produced for the inspection of the Committee, they caused a thrill of horror to run through all who were present. The reader will be best able to form some idea of the condition of the interior of what was known as 'the strong room' in the Fleet Prison, mentioned in a paragraph of the Report just cited, after perusing the following description of it, extracted from the Report of the Visiting Committee :—

> This place is like a vault, like those in which the dead are interred, and wherein the bodies of persons dying in the said prison are usually deposited till the coroner's inquest hath passed upon them; it has no chimney nor fireplace, nor any light but what comes over the door or through a hole of about eight inches square. It is neither paved nor boarded, and the rough bricks appear both on the sides and top, being neither wainscoted nor plastered. What adds to the dampness and stench of the place is its being built over the common sewer, and adjoining to the sink, and where all the nastiness of the prison is cast.

No wonder that the shocking sanitary state of these vile pestilential holes caused a deadly malady, known as gaol-distemper, to prevail, which in the year 1730 carried off one chief baron, one sheriff, and several others while on the Oxford circuit. No

wonder that, twenty years later, the noxious fumes emitted by Newgate Prison attacked, and eventually killed, two judges, the Lord Mayor, one alderman, and others to the number of sixty persons and upwards, while sitting in the Old Bailey Sessions House.[1]

The result of this visit was the institution of a Crown prosecution of Huggins and Bambridge—who were straightway arrested and committed to Newgate—and the introduction of Bills into Parliament for the disablement of Bambridge from discharging the duties of warden, and for the better regulation of the infamous den over which he had presided. Bambridge was tried at the Old Bailey on May 22, 1729, for the murder of Castell, but was acquitted, which, unfortunately, again happened a year later, when he was tried on appeal.

The exertions of Captain Oglethorpe and the Committee did not abate. They visited the Marshalsea Prison, and found an even worse state of affairs prevailing under a butcher named Acton, to whom the profits accruing from lodgings and perquisites in the establishment had been let at an annual rent of three hundred and forty pounds by the Deputy Knight Marshal, John Darby.

> Acton (says Wright, in his Memoir of General Oglethorpe), to make his bargain as advantageous to himself as possible, left no kind of artifice or means of oppression and intimidation untried. He encouraged among his old and hardened prisoners the practice of forcing those newly committed to pay 'garnish,' and levying fines upon one another under frivolous pretences. The money thus exacted was spent at the tap-house: therefore those scoundrels who were most active in keeping up their cruel games were favoured by the gaoler as the best friends of the house. . . . Acton, to swell his profits, ordered his servants at the lodge to obstruct those who brought provisions to their friends; and, under the cloak of searching for prohibited liquors, they rudely assaulted poor women who carried scanty supplies to their unfortunate husbands.

More than three hundred debtors were confined on what was termed the 'common side' of the prison, and as many as fifty were locked into a room barely measuring six feet square

[1] Brayley's *Londiniana*, iv. 154–5; Maitland, *History of London*, ii. 951.

from eight o'clock in the evening till the same hour on the following morning—deaths frequently resulting from the foul atmosphere. What were called the 'sick-wards' were a positive libel on the designation—the sick being either compelled to lay on boards stretched upon trestles, upon the floor, or to recline suspended in hammocks. In these wards scarcely a day passed by without a death, and in the spring the number averaged eight daily. With the dead the living were occasionally locked up at the instigation of Acton. The wretch was tried at Kingston in 1729, for the murder of five prisoners, but was acquitted in consequence of the conflicting nature of the evidence.

The third inquiry which the Committee instituted was into the state of the King's Bench Prison, in which the number of debtors was six hundred and fifty-seven; and although the prison itself was bad enough in all conscience, and insufficient to shelter even a half of the prisoners, no charges of either violence or cruelty could be lodged against the Deputy Marshal, John Mullens, who 'had done many acts of compassion, and whose free confession and satisfactory answers entitled him to favour rather than blame.'

The exertions of this Committee won the hearty commendation of the poet Thomson, who in his poem on 'Winter' thus eulogised them :—

> And here can I forget the generous band
> Who, touched with human woe, redressive searched
> Into the horrors of the gloomy jail?
> Unpitied and unheard, where misery moans,
> Where sickness pines, where thirst and hunger burn,
> And poor misfortune feels the lash of vice;
> While in the land of liberty—the land
> Whose every street and public meeting glow
> With open freedom—little tyrants raged,
> Snatched the lean morsels from the starving mouth,
> Tore from cold wintry limbs the tattered weed,
> E'en robbed them of the last of comforts, sleep,
> The freeborn Briton to the dungeon chained,
> Or, as the lust of cruelty prevailed,
> At pleasure marked him with inglorious stripes,
> And crushed out lives by secret barbarous ways,
> That for their country would have toiled or bled.

Extraordinary as was the sufferance which countenanced

the tyranny of so odious a system, more extraordinary still was the resistance which was offered in many quarters to all attempts at its amelioration or removal. There still exists, there always has existed, there doubtless ever will exist, among the community a section who make a point of strenuously opposing everything in the shape of alterations, more especially those which professedly have for their object the public weal. Standing in mortal dread of what they are pleased to term innovation, they steadily resist all improvements, however manifest, whereby it is sought to benefit the body politic; and what influence they possess they invariably exert for the purpose of crippling, delaying, and destroying every plan having in contemplation a more equitable adjustment of the rights and duties of man with man. It was so in the England of the last century, and it is melancholy to record that the results attendant on the exposure of these evils flourishing like a green bay-tree in the land resembled the gourd that the Hebrew prophet beheld in his vision, which came up in a night and vanished in a night. How wofully little the barbarity, extortion, and tyranny of the prison system, in the treatment not only of debtors but of all other prisoners and captives, had been diminished in the second half of the eighteenth century may be read by those who run in the pages of contemporary fiction. One need go no further for pictures of prison horrors than Fielding's novel, 'Amelia,' a work published in 1751, when he was a Bow Street magistrate, which, as he says in the dedication to Ralph Allen, was 'sincerely designed to expose some of the most glaring evils' in the prison system. The shameful practice followed by rapacious gaolers of detaining such prisoners who by the verdict of juries were declared not guilty, or on whom the grand jury did not find such an appearance of guilt as subjected them to trial, or against whom prosecutors did not appear, for fees and fines, receives its exemplification in the fourth chapter of 'Amelia,' which discloses the secrets of the prison-house :—

There lay a wretch almost naked, and who bore in his countenance, joined to an appearance of honesty, the marks of poverty, hunger, and disease. He had, moreover, a wooden leg and two or

three scars on his forehead. 'The case of this poor man is indeed unhappy enough,' said Robinson. 'He hath served his country, lost his limb, and received several wounds at the siege of Gibraltar. When he was discharged from the hospital abroad he came over to get into that of Chelsea, but could not immediately, as none of his officers were then in England. In the meantime he was one day apprehended and committed on suspicion of stealing three herrings from a fishmonger. He was tried several months ago for this offence, and acquitted—indeed, his innocence manifestly appeared at the trial; but he was brought back again for his fees, and here he hath lain ever since.'[1]

It should be mentioned that this was one of the many prisoners witnessed by a certain Mr. Booth, who had been committed to Bridewell by an ignorant justice named Jonathan Thrasher, Esq. (one of the justices of the peace for the Liberty of Westminster), on a charge of having assaulted a watchman, when he had merely interfered to prevent an outrage by two men of fortune, who bribed the constable to let them escape. The moment he entered the prison-yard, he was surrounded by a number of the prisoners, who demanded 'garnish,' which the keeper explained was money customarily given by new prisoners for supplying drink to their companions.[2] The same novel shows that no distinction was made between the debtor and the hardened felon. The first persons whom Booth passed by on his survey of the gaol were a young woman in rags, sitting on the ground, supporting the head of an old man in a dying condition, and then was informed that these were father and daughter, and that the latter had been sent to prison for stealing a loaf of bread, in order to save the former from starvation, and the former for receiving it, because he well knew that it had been stolen.[3] Three street robbers, in fetters, sojourning there in sure and certain hope of paying the last penalty of the law at the ensuing sessions, were enjoying life while they could over a pipe and a bottle of wine.

Lunacy was classed among crimes, and manacles, lashes, blows, kicks, scourgings, brutal violence, were the chief agencies employed in its treatment. Assuredly Hogarth was not caricaturing when he incorporated the horrors of the mad-

[1] *Amelia*, b. i. c. iv. [2] *Ibid.* b. i. c. iii. [3] *Ibid.* b. iii. c. iv.

house into one of his series of the 'Rake's Progress.' Many poor creatures were slowly starved to death, even in the public lunatic asylums, while others wasted away under the ravages of the most loathsome diseases, chained and fettered hand and foot. As if this was not enough, they were publicly exhibited. A writer in the 'World' for June 7, 1753, says :—

> To gratify the curiosity of a country friend I accompanied him a few weeks ago to Bedlam. It was in the Easter Week, when, to my surprise, I found a hundred people at least who, having paid their twopence apiece, were suffered unattended to run up and down the wards, making sport and diversion of the miserable inhabitants.

The manner in which prisoners under sentence of death were confined, the debaucheries in which they were permitted to indulge while in that state, and the accounts we have of the grossness and barbarity of their conduct appear in this our day simply astounding. He who attempted to devise a scheme for their prevention found himself confronted by a labyrinth of difficulties almost insuperable.[1]

In a paper contained in No. 38 of that short-lived periodical the 'Idler,' published on January 6, 1759, it was computed by Dr. Johnson that there were then no fewer than twenty thousand debtors in prison, and that at least one in four died annually in consequence of 'the corrosion of resentment, the heaviness of sorrow, the corruption of confined air, the want of exercise and sometimes of food, the contagion of diseases from which there is no retreat, and the severity of tyrants against whom there can be no resistance.' This is more than probable. Henry Brooke's novel entitled 'The Fool of Quality' contains sad revelations of the severe pressure of the law upon all prisoners for debt, who were driven to kennel together, in a hovel fit only to stable a pair of horses, and to huddle together in dark rooms with bare walls ; large sums being extorted from the miserable captives, 'as grapes are squeezed into a wine-press.' In 1771 there were about four thousand prisoners for debt in England, and yet will it be believed that in the face of

[1] See a remarkably curious and minute description of the King's Bench Prison in Archenholz's *Picture of England*, pp. 273-91.

that deplorable fact, the Bar, according to the 'Annual Register' of that year, presented an address to the Benchers of the Middle Temple, beseeching the expulsion from that society of James Stephen for having dared to employ his pen in writing against the system?[1]

In Goldsmith's delightful fiction the Vicar of Wakefield is made to relate that he was arrested at the instigation of the squire, through sheer inability to pay his annual rent, and that the sheriff's officers conducted him and his sorrowing family to a prison, primarily constructed for use in time of war, which consisted of one large apartment, strongly grated, and paved with stone, where the hardened felon and the poor debtor stood on a footing of perfect equality at certain hours in the four-and-twenty, and where every prisoner had a separate cell, where he was locked in for the night. Doctor Primrose confesses that he arrived at the prison in expectation of beholding misery and suffering, and the walls resounding with lamentation. But in this he was disappointed. The one thought of the wretched captives seemed to be that of drowning their cares in liquor. He was soon apprised of the usual perquisite required upon these occasions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money he had was very near being all exhausted, with the result that liquor was immediately sent for, and before long the prison presented a scene of riot, revelry, and profanity. 'How, cried I to myself,' he says, 'shall men so very wicked be cheerful, and shall I be melancholy? I feel only the same confinement with them, and I think I have more reason to be happy.'[2]

In the year 1773, John Howard, who then led the life of a country gentleman on his estate at Cardington, was nominated to the shrievalty of the county of Bedford; an office which at that time was regarded as conferring more of dignity than obligation to the performance of duty upon him who held it. For John Howard it was destined to continue the work of prison reform—a work before which the stoutest heart might

[1] Stephen's pamphlet, which was entitled *Considerations on Imprisonment for Debt*, was very ably written, and passed through several editions.

[2] *Vicar of Wakefield*, c. xxv.

have well quailed—which James Oglethorpe, nearly forty-four years previously had so worthily begun. No sooner was Howard invested with the authority of High Sheriff than he set himself with praiseworthy diligence to rectify the grievous abuses to which his eyes were opened in Bedford Gaol, which came under his own immediate jurisdiction. Having done this, he decided to visit the gaols of the neighbouring towns of Huntingdon and Cambridge, and discovered that both exhibited evils very similar to those at Bedford. In November, 1773, he proceeded to Northampton, where he found that the keeper of the Bridewell received thirty-six pounds as his annual salary, and paid forty pounds for his office of gaoler. The prison itself was close and confined, and there was a dungeon in which lay several prisoners. The allowance of food to debtors consisted of two quartern loaves a week each, and for felons two half-peck loaves; the chapel was at the top of the gaoler's house, which rendered it 'painful for prisoners loaded with irons to go up and down the stairs.'[1] At Leicester the philanthropist found the prison bad in every respect. The felons' day and night rooms were dungeons from five to seven steps under ground. The prisoners slept on thick mats, but had no coverlets.[2] Down twenty-eight steps, at Nottingham gaol, on the side of a hill, were three rooms for criminals who could pay for the privilege of inhabiting them, and down twelve steps more were 'deep dungeons cut in the sandy rock, very damp.' Derby was not so bad. At Stafford, the gaol was 'much too small for the number of prisoners,' and so was the felons' courtyard. The prison at Wolverhampton was 'greatly out of repair,' and so insecure that prisoners, even for the slightest offences, were kept in irons.[3] Howard found the dungeons of Warwick Gaol 'close, damp, and offensive,' and the felons' dungeon at Worcester twenty-six feet under ground. 'Only one court for all the prisoners, and one small day-room, twelve feet by eleven feet, for men and women felons'—this is the record of Gloucester.[4] Lincoln Castle, when Howard visited it, was in a deplorable condition. 'By a trap-door,' wrote he,

[1] *State of Prisons*, ed. 1777, pt. 1, p. 309. [2] *Ibid.* p. 277.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 329. [4] *Ibid.* p. 350.

'you go down ten steps to two vaulted dungeons for criminals, eight feet high—one, the *Pit*, fourteen feet by twenty-one, window two feet by fourteen inches: the other, within it, the *Condemned Cell*, fourteen feet by eight; window about nine inches by eighteen; a little straw on the floors: both dungeons dirty and offensive.'[1] At Ely, where the prison was unsafe, the gaoler had endeavoured to secure the inmates by chaining them down on their backs upon the floor, placing an iron collar with spikes about their necks, and a heavy iron bar over their legs.' 'Very close, very offensive, no chimney, no water, no court, no sewer'—such is Howard's description of the prison in the city of Exeter when he first visited it.

The town gaol of Plymouth, which was one of the many that were inspected by Howard in 1775, possessed 'two rooms for felons and a large room above for debtors. One of the former—the *Clink*, seventeen feet by eight, about five-and-a-half feet high, had a wicket in the door seven inches by five to admit light and air. To this, he was informed, three men, who were confined near two months under sentence of transportation, came by turns for air. At Gosport, Howard found the prison filthy; those at Southampton offensive; the gaol at Plymouth undeserving the name; the town gaol at Portsmouth wofully defective, as also that at Newport. The prison at Petworth was too small. At Horsham all the wretched prisoners were incarcerated in one small room, and the result had been that the keeper had fallen a victim to gaol-distemper.

In 1775, Howard, now more than ever touched with human woe, started on an errand of mercy through the counties of York, Lancaster, and Warwick. On the road he took occasion to inspect the Bridewells of Folkingham and Huntingdon. It was no uncommon thing in those shameful times to imprison half-witted people in the common gaols, and in Folkingham Bridewell Howard actually discovered a wretched lunatic, who had been captive for years in a filthy hole beneath the house tenanted by the keeper, and he also discovered two insane persons in the prison at Hull—a filthy and offensive establishment. At the Bridewell in Middlewich, county of Chester, were dark

[1] *State of Prisons*, pt. 1, p. 296.

rooms that had 'perforations in the door of about two inches in diameter,' in order that the prisoners might not be suffocated. The prisons in Essex, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire were all as bad as they could possibly be.

On a visit to Thetford Gaol, Howard found 'a small dungeon down a ladder of ten steps, with a small window; and in this pit, at the Summer Assizes held in the town, from sixteen to twenty persons were usually confined for several days and nights, without regard to age, sex, or any circumstances.'

It would be easy to fill pages with citations from Howard's work, testifying to the horrible state of English prisons, to say nothing of any other, in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. One excerpt more, and then we must leave him. The horrors of Knaresborough Gaol in 1776 are thus described :—

> It is under the hall, of difficult access; the door about four feet from the ground. Only one room, about twelve feet square; earth floor; no fireplace; very offensive; a common sewer from the town running through it uncovered. I was informed that an officer confined here took in with him a dog to defend him from vermin; *but the dog was soon destroyed and the prisoner's face much disfigured by them.*[1]

Proceeding to Wymondham, Howard found a criminal who was compelled to sleep in a dungeon only six feet by four, with two others, in irons, suffering from cutaneous diseases. Towards the close of 1776, Howard revisited the gaols of the metropolis, and found improvement in none.[2] By the year 1777, the

[1] *State of Prisons*, p. 372.

[2] To what extent the chief prison of London had been reformed by the last decade of the eighteenth century may be gathered from the testimony of Francis Place, who says that in 1794 he on several occasions visited people who were confined for libel and other misdemeanours in Newgate, and that on one Sunday in particular he went there accompanied by several women, who were relatives of those whom he went to see. When the time for quitting the prison arrived, Place and his friends went in a body of nine or ten persons through a sort of yard. Into this yard a number of half-naked felons were admitted, and they were in such a horrible condition that Place and his friends were obliged to request the gaoler to compel them to tie up their rags. When they had made themselves slightly decent, the party of visitors ventured to come into the yard, where they were pressed upon and almost hustled by the felons, whose irons and discordant voices clamouring for money made a frightful noise

self-denying and diligent soul had satisfied himself as to the condition of every gaol in the different counties of England. Arriving at Warrington, where his friend Aikin practised surgery, Howard resolved to publish the results of his investigations. Eyres, a printer of Warrington, printed the manuscript under the personal supervision of the author, and Cadell, of the Strand, published it. The preface was dated from Cardington, in Bedfordshire, on April 5, 1777, and the work itself was dedicated to the Legislative Assembly, 'in gratitude for the encouragement which they had given to the design.' Howard was particularly careful in causing copies to be supplied to such members of Parliament as were at all likely to proceed to an investigation of the appalling array of stubborn facts contained in them. In so doing he displayed much wisdom, for shortly before 'The State of Prisons' made its appearance, the Government had decided in favour of the detention of convicts under sentence of penal servitude in their own country, instead of inundating the colonies with them. By way of experiment, it was decided to send a certain number of criminals to the hulks, or floating prisons. The resolve was carried into execution. In the autumn of the year 1776, Howard visited the hulks, and, as might be expected, saw very much in the system to condemn; but, 'as the scheme was new and temporary, he was unwilling to complain.' Two years later a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed for the consideration of the hulks system, and Howard, being among the number of those examined, described what had come under his own observation on board the 'Justitia'—the bad clothing, the worse food and accommodation; the sickness and death; the neglect and indifference—nothing was withheld. The exposure produced some effect, seeing that early in 1778 Howard found on examination that while much hideousness remained, much had been removed. Con-

that alarmed the women. Place, who understood these matters, had collected all the halfpence he could, and by throwing a few at a time over the heads of the felons, set them scrambling, swearing, and all but fighting, and while it continued the women and the rest made their way as quickly as possible across the yard.—*Add. MSS. Brit. Mus.* 27826, p. 186.

vinced that the hulks system was in most respects a beneficial one, Parliament passed an Act for its continuance. What effect did the system produce in the reformation of criminals? Hear Dr. Patrick Colquhoun :—'Most of them, instead of profiting by the punishment they have suffered, forgetting they were under sentence of death, and undismayed by the dangers they have escaped, immediately rush into the same course of degradation and warfare upon the public.'[1]

The seed which had been sown through the labours of Howard had not fallen on stony ground, though it was slow in coming up, and did not bear fruit until many years afterwards. Nor was the great philanthropist allowed to see the desire of his eyes—dying as he did in a similar mission at Kherson in Russia in January, 1790. Two years before that event an expedition conveying more than seven hundred convicts had left England under command of Captain Philip, who, having selected the coast of Port Jackson as the place of landing, hoisted, on January 26, 1788, the British ensign on the beach of Sydney cove, and laid the foundations of the first penal settlement in New South Wales.

[1] *Police of the Metropolis*, ed. 1800, p. 470.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

State of religion in England under Queen Anne—Under the first Georges—The National Church—Social condition of the Anglican clergy—Pluralities—Non-residence, episcopal and clerical—The Presbytery and the Hierarchy—Ordination—The Methodist revival—Church services—Church abuses—The congregation in church—The parish clerk—Sermons—Epitaphs—Bells—State of English Protestant nonconformity—The Evangelical revival and its results.

No sketch, however slight, of the social condition of England in the last century can lay any pretensions to completeness if it does not include some account, although it be but a very cursory one, of the religious world of the time.

The eighteenth century, following as it did almost immediately upon that season of thick moral darkness and spiritual depression which hung like a curtain over the country during the reign of Charles II.—the reaction against the domination of the martial saints who had in the eyes of the nation inherited the earth far too long—cannot be pronounced as an improvement upon it, if regarded from a religious and moral point of view. That the profligacy of the age was neither so open nor yet so unblushing may perhaps be admitted, but that its depravity was quite as deep is beyond all question. The court until long after the accession of George III. still continued to be tainted by much of that shameless licentiousness with which it had been characterised during the last forty years of the preceding century; leaders, both in Church and State, careless in their lives and ungodly in their conduct, neglected their duty and became corrupt and altogether abominable; while the public and private life of the aristocracy, of the upper

and middle classes, as of the lower orders, was marked by nothing so much as duplicity, conjugal infidelity, dissoluteness, and laxity.

As is always the case, the habits prevailing in other spheres at once acted on, and were influenced by, religion. The selfishness, the corruption, the worship of expediency, the scepticism as to all higher motives that characterised the politicians of the school of Walpole, the heartless cynicism reigning in fashionable life, which is so clearly reflected in the letters of Horace Walpole and Chesterfield, the spirit of a brilliant and varied contemporary literature, eminently distinguished for its measured sobriety of judgment and for its fastidious purity and elegance of expression, but for the most part deficient in depth, in passion, and in imagination, may all be traced in the popular theology.[1]

Bearing this state of things in mind, it is not suprising that piety should have decayed, that public truth and morality should have evaporated, and that the National Church, losing its hold upon the conduct and habits of all classes of society, should have soon sunk into a state of torpor and supineness not far removed from that into which Western Christendom had relapsed before the dawn of the Renaissance.

It would not be difficult to adduce, in confirmation of the truth of the foregoing observations, much evidence derived from contemporaneous sources. In July, 1710, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu expressed her conviction in a letter written to the Bishop of Salisbury, accompanying a copy of her translation of 'Epictetus,' that more atheists were to be found among the fine ladies of the times than among the lower sort of rakes.[2] Addison, writing in No. 47 of the 'Freeholder,' declared that there was 'less appearance of religion in England than in any neighbouring State or kingdom.' A similar note was sounded in a clause of the memorial which was drawn up by Convocation, and presented to Queen Anne in 1711. It asserted that 'a due regard to religious persons, places, and things has scarce in any age been more wanting.' The poet Gay, in that amusing sketch satirically depicting the alarm and apprehension which was inspired in the bosoms of the London citizens by the comet that appeared in the heavens during the month of October, 1712,

[1] Lecky's *Hist. of England in Eighteenth Century*, ii. 531.
[2] *Misc. Corr.* ed. Lord Wharncliffe, ii. 4.

and which Whiston had foretold would utterly destroy the earth, gives a sly hit at the fact that the ordinances of religion were more honoured in the breach than in the observance, when he causes the fictitious author to observe:—'It was now I reflected with exceeding trouble and sorrow that I had disused family prayer for above five years—a custom of late entirely neglected by men of any business or station.' If the accession of the House of Hanover was a blessing to the country, it was not an unmixed blessing, since its two first monarchs contributed neither by precept nor by example towards the elevation of the tone of society, and brought no refining influences to bear upon the vice and immorality which flourished rampant in every direction. During the early years of Sir Robert Walpole's administration there was no joke which obtained greater currency among the upper classes of society than one to which Lady M. W. Montagu refers in a letter to the Countess of Mar (1723)—one which asserted that certain statesmen were then engaged in 'cooking up a Bill at a hunting-seat in Norfolk,' for the purpose of excising the word 'not' from the Decalogue and inserting it in every clause in the Creed. 'It certainly might be carried on with great ease,' observes her ladyship, 'the world being utterly *revenu de bagatelles*; and honour, virtue, and reputation, which we used to hear of in our nursery, are as much laid aside as crumpled ribbons.'

When George II. had been king about two years, the famous Charles de Secundat, Baron de Montesquieu, a man of great parts, visited England. He resided among the best society in the capital from 1729 till 1730, and was greatly impressed with all that he heard and saw of our social condition. There is no reason to doubt, therefore, that he was giving expression to what was nothing more than the plain truth when, in his 'Pensées Diverses,' speaking 'de la religion,' he said, 'Il n'y a pas de nation qui ait plus besoin de religion que les Anglais. Ceux qui n'ont pas peur de se perdre doivent avoir la peur d'être damnés,' nor when, in reference to his stay in England, he says, 'Je passe en France pour avoir peu de religion, en Angleterre pour en avoir trop.' Had Montesquieu

troubled himself to ransack the pages of English writers for corroborative testimony to the chronic indifference which he observed that the nation manifested towards religion, he would have succeeded in finding enough and to spare. Almost the very first words with which Bishop Butler prefaces his famous treatise designed to prove the analogy of natural and revealed religion to the constitution and the course of nature, published in May, 1736, are these :—

> It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious ; and accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisal for its having so long interrupted the pleasure of the world.[1]

And again, in one of his charges :—

> The influence of religion is more and more wearing out of the mind of men. The number of those who call themselves unbelievers increases, and with their number their zeal. The deplorable distinction of our age is an avowed scorn of religion in some, and a growing disregard of it in the generality.

If, again, he had turned to the charge which was delivered in 1738 by Dr. Thomas Secker, Bishop of Oxford, to the clergy of that diocese, his eyes would have alighted upon the following passage :—

> Men have always complained of their own times, and always with too much reason. . But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest which we feel ourselves, and therefore mistakes are easily made in comparing one age with another, yet in this we cannot be mistaken—that an open and profound disregard to religion is becoming the distinguishing characteristic of the present age.[2]

So, too, nearly three years later, Dr. Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, confessed that great laxity, both in principle and practice, was gradually descending to the middle classes, under the influence and authority of higher examples, and through too great a disposition to approve and follow them. To him it seemed as if the entire nation was on the point of

[1] *Adv. to Analogy*, 2nd ed. 1736.
[2] Secker's *Eight Charges*, ed. Porteus, 3rd ed. 1780, p. 4.

being overwhelmed by profligacy and unbelief, and he was unable to entertain any hope for a generation so evil and rebellious except a diligent endeavour on the part of the parochial clergy to check and resist it by putting fresh incense in their censers, and standing between the dead and the living.[1] Bishop Berkeley not only confessed that corruption had become a national crime, having affected the lowest as well as the highest, but expressed a hope that, as it was of so general and notorious a character as that it could not be matched in former ages, it would not be imitated by posterity. 'In these times,' wrote he, 'a cold indifference for the national religion—indeed, for all matters of faith and Divine worship—is thought good sense.' Subsequently, he adds :—'It is even become fashionable to deny religion; and that little talent of ridicule is applied to such wrong purposes that a good Christian can hardly keep himself in countenance.'[2] All this time the air was filled with controversies, and polemical divines, of whom there was no lack, were actively engaged in the task of vindicating revealed religion from the attacks of a whole host of assailants. The same prelate speaks in different places of 'the prevailing prejudice against the dispensers of God's word,' of the 'prevailing torrent of infidelity,' of 'the prevalence of atheism and irreligion,' and of 'the irreligion and bad example of those who are styled the better sort.' 'To sap a solemn creed by solemn sneer,' to deride holiness of life, to launch the shafts of ridicule at the things which are commonly regarded as sacred, was considered not only clever, but praiseworthy. This is forcibly illustrated over and over again in the writings of some of the most distinguished men of the age. Their Christianity, if they had any, was merely skin-deep, for while they professed belief in the doctrines of that religion which is revealed in the pages of the New Testament, their everyday life testified plainly to their adherence to the ethics of heathenism. Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and Epictetus, and many another sage of classical antiquity, approached more nearly to the Christian pattern than the fashionable libertines of the

[1] *Charges to the Clergy of London*, 1741, pp. 7–8.
[2] *Berkeley's Works*, iii. 63.

eighteenth century. No reference is here made to those little sins of omission and commission, to which the best of men are liable, but to a universal looseness in conduct and morals which nowadays would be considered totally incompatible with the Christian profession. Well has it been said that there is just as much and as little trace of Christianity to be found in Horace Walpole's voluminous correspondence as in the writings of Pliny the Younger, and that he has 'described his first sight of the man who was guiding a revolution in creed and practice which has deeply and permanently modified the religion of the English-speaking race (John Wesley) in a letter which, if translated into good Latin, might pass muster as an extract from the familiar correspondence of Gallio.'[1] Hear, above all, the verdict of the Rev. Dr. John Brown, Vicar of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, respecting religion, in his celebrated 'Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times,' published in 1757 :—

> Did the writer court the applause of his polite readers (if any such peradventure may honour him with their regard) he would preface this part of his subject with an apology for the rudeness of hinting at religious principle. To suppose a man of fashion swayed in his conduct by a regard to futurity is an affront to the delicacy and refinement of his taste. Hence the day set apart by the laws of his country for religious service he derides and affronts as a vulgar and obsolete institution. Should you propose to him the renewal of that family devotion which concluded the guiltless evening entertainments of his ancestry you would become an object of his pity rather than contempt. The sublime truths, the pure and simple morals of the Gospel, are despised and trod under foot. Can we wonder if that profession which asserts these truths and preaches these morals be treated with a similar contempt?[2]

The first chapter of Hannah More's very thoughtful 'Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World,' which made its appearance anonymously in 1787, contains this observation :—

> Those who are able to make a fair comparison must allow that, however the present age may be improved in other important and

[1] Trevelyan's *Fox*, p. 99.

[2] Brown's *Estimate*, i. 54, 2nd ed. 1757; see also L'Abbé le Blanc's *Letters on the English Nation*, and Brewster's *Secular Essay*.

valuable advantages, yet there is but little appearance remaining among the great and the powerful of that righteousness which exalteth a nation. They must confess that there has been a moral revolution in the national manners and principles very little analogous to that great political one which we hear so much and so justly extolled; that our public virtue bears little proportion to our religious blessings, and that our religion has decreased in a pretty exact proportion to our having secured the means of enjoying it.[1]

Now, what do all these citations go to prove? Indisputably this—that the Christianity of the upper as of the lower classes in England during the first three quarters of the eighteenth century was both low and cold, nominal to a deplorable degree. Men had plenty to eat, to drink and to put on; the flesh-pots were full, but their better life was in a languishing state.

Upon the foundations which had previously been laid by the philosophical writers of the seventeenth century, the propagators of deism attempted to raise a representative system from the beginning to the middle of the eighteenth century, every department of knowledge, every branch of science, being laid under contribution, every exertion being made on their part to draw down contempt upon the doctrines of Christianity. There was an attempt at a revival of paganism, and at a promulgation of a code of practical irreligion—a code from which all reverence for the principles of morality and religion was apparently expunged—a code which, instead of inculcating love without dissimulation, inculcated only dissimulation without love. Those evil magicians, the master spirits of the mischievous tendencies of the age, in their malignant attacks upon Christianity, were influenced considerably by continental philosophers. Indeed their hands were greatly strengthened by them, and together they sowed those seeds of which the French Revolution proved the fruit.

Never has a century risen upon Christian England so void of soul and faith as that which opened with Queen Anne and which reached its misty noon beneath the second George—a dewless night succeeded by a sunless dawn. There was no freshness in the past, and no promise in the future. The Puritans were buried and the

[1] *Estimate*, i. pp. 111–12.

Methodists were not born. The philosopher of the age was Bolingbroke, the moralist was Addison, the minstrel was Pope, and the preacher was Atterbury. The world had the idle and discontented look of the morning after some mad holiday, and like rocket-sticks and the singed paper from last night's squibs the spent jokes of Charles and Rochester lay all about, and people yawned to look at them. The reign of buffoonery was past, but the reign of faith and earnestness had not commenced.

The history of the Church of England during the eighteenth century is the history of a torpid institution. Within three years after the accession of the House of Brunswick, the long, vehement dispute known as the Bangorian controversy culminated in the silencing of the Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation, which were destined to remain so until the reign of Queen Victoria. Simultaneously almost with this event there seemed to take possession of the Church a sort of spiritual lethargy which has been rightly characterised as 'one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of religion.'[1] The candle of Divine grace burnt low within the Church, and while she slumbered and slept her enemies directed their energies towards the subversion of revealed religion. Rash prophets would they have been who, in that age, enveloped as it was in one wide-settled Egyptian darkness, had dared to prognosticate for the National Church that extraordinary quickening of the spiritual life within her pale which she has displayed during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Adequately to discuss all the various aspects of life in the English Church during the eighteenth century would obviously demand volumes instead of pages, so wide and extensive is the field. But while this is impracticable, a brief notice of some of the many points of interest which it presents may be attempted. And first in reference to the character and the social position of the Anglican clergy.

There is, perhaps, no portion of Lord Macaulay's entertaining and attractive 'History,' which has provoked more hostile criticism than that celebrated portion of the third chapter which he devotes to a sketch of character of the Anglican clergy in the rural districts of England from the

[1] Overton's *Evangelical Revival*, p. 1.

epoch of the Restoration of Monarchy to the date of the accession of James II. The historian has been accused by his critics of unduly exaggerating statements, of mistaking the exception for the rule, of a desire to blacken the condition of things as much as possible, and even of falsifying the evidence of the writers whom he cites as his authorities, in order to lower the social condition of the pastorate in the eyes of his readers. But there is no reason to impugn the accuracy, in its main outlines, of the picture which Lord Macaulay has drawn. They who, without strong prepossession, have been at the trouble to compare the writer's account with his authorities have generally arrived at the same, or nearly the same, conclusion which he has reached. What is more to the point, it may be said with perfect truth that his description would have applied almost word for word with equal force to quite one-half the rural clergy of England for fully three-quarters of the eighteenth century—more particularly to those who ministered in the impoverished and semi-barbarous districts of the northern counties of England—Westmoreland, Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, and Yorkshire—to say nothing at all of Wales.

The Anglican priesthood (says the historian) was divided into two sections, which in acquirements, in manners, and in social position, differed widely from each other. One section, trained for cities and courts, comprised men familiar with all ancient and modern learning . . . men whose address, politeness, and knowledge of the world qualified them to manage the consciences of the wealthy and the noble. . . . The other section . . . was dispersed over the country, and consisted chiefly of persons not at all wealthier and not much more refined than small farmers or upper servants. . . . The[se] clergy were regarded as a plebeian class. . . . A waiting-woman was generally considered as the most suitable helpmate for a parson. . . . Not one living in fifty enabled the incumbent to bring up a family comfortably. . . . It was a white day on which he was admitted into the kitchen of a great house and regaled by the servants with cold meat and ale. His children were brought up like the children of the neighbouring peasantry. His boys followed the plough, and his girls went out to service. Study he found impossible, for the advowson of his living would hardly have sold for a sum sufficient to purchase a good theological library; and he might be considered as unusually lucky if he had ten or twelve dog-eared volumes among the pots and pans on his shelves.[1]

[1] *Hist. Eng.* c. iii. pp. 325-34.

From these passages it will be readily perceived that while the dignitaries stood on an equal footing with the richest peers in the kingdom, the social position which was enjoyed by the greater part of the rural clergy was inferior to that of the yeomen and farmers who composed their flocks. Of the English sees there were at least eight the incomes of which barely amounted to 600*l.* a year, and when we descend from the emoluments attaching to these to the stipends of the ordinary clergy, we find 'readers,' for instance, even attached to metropolitan churches, remunerated at the rate of 20*l.* per annum. Chaplains in the families of gentlemen ordinarily received 30*l.*, while lecturers in the provincial churches could command 60*l.* The income of the ordinary parochial clergyman at this period fluctuated between 80*l.* and 20*l.* per annum. Massey estimates the number of livings under 80*l.* per annum in the reign of George III. at over 5,000.[1] Thus the rural clergy, possessed of no more than sufficient for the day, never attempted to lift themselves into the social rank of gentlemen, and became the prototypes, it must be confessed, of Parsons Trulliber or Adams, or even of 'Mr. Gilfil, an excellent old gentleman, who smoked very long pipes and preached very short sermons.'

Sad as were the miseries and hardships under which the beneficed clergy groaned and travailed in the first half of the eighteenth century, they were slight in comparison with those which their unbeneficed brethren suffered. Not a few of them are set forth in a plea for their rights and better usage contained in a letter which was addressed to the Bishop of London by the Rev. Thomas Stackhouse, who was well qualified by experience for such a task. He asserts that the most lucrative posts were those held by the lecturers, who went 'skimming about the parish once or twice a year,' and who carried off at one swoop more than would have contributed to the maintenance of three or four curates. Particularly was this the case at Oxford, where, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, according to Cox, a city lectureship—being remunerated by canal shares, which were then at a high rate—was worth at least 150*l.*

[1] *Hist. Eng. in the Reign of George the Third*, ii. 32.

a year, with duty only every fourth Sunday. 'Any common footman,' he continues, 'with seven pounds yearly, and seven shillings a week board-wages, with a good entire livery, his master's cast-off clothes, and now and then some accidental vails and private advantages, is in a more prosperous and thriving condition of life than the highest stipendiary curate among us.'[1] Elsewhere the writer condemns the practice among incumbents of hiring poor brethren, who had grown old in the service, and had nothing else upon which to depend, 'to read prayers for two-pence a time and a dish of coffee; to preach for twelve pence a sermon and a Sunday's dinner; and to do the other occasional offices at a proportional rate.'[2] The stipends which were attached to curacies at this time may be seen from the following advertisement:—'1766—Wanted, Immediately, a Curate for the parish of East Ansty, in Devon. Salary, 25*l.* per annum, with perquisites.' It was the insufficiency of stipend, combined with other circumstances, which furnished the infamous Fleet parsons with an excuse for their operations.

Seeing clearly that the condition of the vast bulk of the parochial clergy was very far from an enviable one, the question presents itself, Whence did it originate? The answer is that it originated in the inadequacy of the parochial endowments; a state of affairs which begat the kindred evil of the holding of benefices in plurality by one and the same incumbent—an evil which was greatly facilitated by the numerous grounds upon which such plurality was legally permissible. The system was, perhaps, justifiable when, for instance, one clergyman held two poor benefices, both within a reasonable distance of each other, and honestly undertook to perform one service in the morning and another in the afternoon, alternately in the church of each; but as much cannot be said for those who considered that the tenure of a bishopric was not incompatible with the tenure of a deanery, an archdeaconry, a living, a canonry, or a prebendal stall, even, it should be clearly borne in mind, when the higher office itself was moderately well endowed. The

[1] Stackhouse's *Miseries and Hardships of Inferior Clergy*, 2nd ed. 1743, p. 63.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 86.

occupants of the four sees of the Principality were usually allowed to hold *in commendam* other ecclesiastical preferment, in order that they might enjoy incomes suitable to their high rank ; nor is it surprising to learn, on the authority of Archdeacon Coxe, that, under the system, Dr. Edmund Gibson, 'a great friend to the Protestant succession,' before he became Bishop of London, combined, or rather pretended to combine, the duties appertaining severally unto the offices of Precentor and Canon Residentiary of Chichester, Archdeacon of Surrey, and Rector of Lambeth, with those of Domestic Chaplain to Archbishop Tenison and Librarian at Lambeth Palace.[1]

It is recorded by Hasted, in his 'History of Kent,' that Dr. Frederick Cornwallis, before his elevation to the see of Lichfield, in 1750, held the rectory of Chelmondiston in Suffolk, with that of Tittleshall St. Mary in Norfolk, a chaplaincy in ordinary to the King, a canonry at Windsor, and a prebendal stall at Lincoln, and conjointly with the see of Lichfield held the deanery of St. Paul's, from 1766 until 1783. A nephew of the same prelate, James Cornwallis, after holding the incumbencies of Ickham and Adesham in Kent, became a Prebendary of Westminster, Rector of Newington in Oxfordshire, and of Boughton Malherbe and Wrotham in the county of Kent, all of which, with the exception of Adesham, he continued to hold during his tenure of the deanery of Salisbury, to which he was appointed in 1775.

Archibald Alison, father of Sir Archibald Alison, the illustrious historian, was ordained to the curacy of Brancepeth, Durham, in 1784, obtained the perpetual curacy of Kenley, in Shropshire, in 1790, a prebendal stall in Salisbury Cathedral in 1791, the vicarage of Ercall, in Shropshire, in 1794, and the living of Roddington, in the same county, three years later.[2]

Posterity is informed by Meadley, the biographer of Paley, that when Dr. Law, the Bishop of Carlisle, had provided for his son (a prebendal stall in the cathedral and the living of Warkworth), he presented Paley, who enjoyed a college fellowship, to the rectory of Musgrove, a village on the banks of the

[1] *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, i. 478.
[2] *Autobiography of Sir A. Alison*, i. 9-21.

Eden in Westmoreland, the living of which was then worth about 80*l.* per annum. This was in 1775. Before the close of the following year Paley was inducted into the vicarage of Dalston, in Cumberland, in the neighbourhood of Rose Castle, worth about 90*l.* per annum. On December 5, 1777, Paley resigned the rectory of Musgrove for the more valuable vicarage of Appleby, estimated at about 200*l.* a year. Between this place and Dalston he now divided his time, residing alternately six months in each. On June 16, 1780, he was installed a prebendary of the fourth stall in the cathedral of Carlisle, worth about 400*l.* per annum. In 1782 he became Archdeacon of Carlisle—a mere sinecure, the duties being performed by the chancellor. To the archdeaconry was attached the rectory of Great Salkeld, worth 120*l.* per annum. These two offices, with the others, he continued to hold until 1785, when he was appointed chancellor of the diocese of Carlisle, 100*l.*; in 1792 inducted to the vicarage of Addingham, near Great Salkeld, 140*l.* a year; vacated Dalston in 1793, on being collated to the vicarage of Stanwix, near Carlisle. The next addition to what Paley's biographer calls 'so comparatively small a portion of preferment in a very opulent establishment' was his institution, in August, 1794, to the prebend of Pancras in St. Paul's Cathedral, which had no specific duties annexed to it, entailed no residence in London, and was tenable with the sub-deanery of Lincoln (worth 700*l.* a year), to which he was presented by Dr. Pretyman. In 1795, the then Bishop of Durham, Dr. Barrington, unsolicited offered Paley the living of Bishop Wearmouth, worth 1,200*l.* a year, which, it is needless to say, he accepted, resigning—what? All his other preferments? No more than the prebendal stall in Carlisle Cathedral and the livings of Stanwix and Addingham. After this we are quite prepared to learn that 'he visited a good deal amongst his neighbours, both at Lincoln and Bishop Wearmouth, and entertained company in a handsome but by no means ostentatious style.'[1]

Richard Watson, before his elevation to the episcopate, held a fellowship and professorship at Trinity College, Cam-

[1] Meadley's *Memoir of Paley*, p. 128.

bridge, a sinecure rectory in North Wales, and the incumbency of Knaptoft, in Leicestershire.

Bishop Newton records, in his 'Life and Anecdotes,' that he was 'no great gainer' by his elevation to the see of Bristol. And why? Because he was forced to resign the prebend of Westminster, the precentorship of York, the lectureship of St. George's, Hanover Square, and the genteel office of sub-almoner.[1] The same prelate subsequently did all he could to dissuade his friend Dr. Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, against relinquishing the deanery of Westminster, which he held conjointly with the bishopric, because 'the two preferments had been united for near a century, and lay so convenient to each other that none of them would be of the same value without the other.'[2] But the bishop withstood the dissuasion of his right reverend brother, and resigned his deanery in 1768. Thomas Herring, it is recorded, held *in commendam* the see of Bangor with the deanery of Rochester. Benjamin Hoadly, his predecessor by one, and the originator of the famous Bangorian controversy, was Bishop of Bangor from 1716 to 1721, and, as far as can be gathered, absented himself from his diocese during the whole time of his tenure.

Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff from 1782 to 1816, made no secret of the fact that he was in receipt, at the close of the eighteenth century, of an income of 2,000*l.* a year, which was derived from the tithes of two churches in Shropshire, two in Leicestershire, two in his diocese, three in Huntingdonshire; of five other appropriations to the bishopric, and two more in the Isle of Ely as appropriations to the archdeaconry of Ely.[3] Even so exemplary a prelate as Dr. Beilby Porteus had no compunctions of conscience in holding his favourite rectory of Hunton, in Kent, with the bishopric of Chester from 1777 to 1787, and relinquished it very reluctantly only on being translated to the see of London.[4] It is not necessary to multiply instances of that which is sufficiently notorious—that as

[1] *Life and Anecdotes prefixed to Works*, ed. 1782, i. 65.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 84.
[3] *Life of Bishop Watson.*
[4] Hodgson's *Life of Porteus*, p. 100.

a rule the ecclesiastical dignities of which the appointment lay in the hands of the Crown were bestowed upon divines not out of regard to any merit, but solely in accordance with their known political views, or by reason of party or personal connections. Watson takes no pains to conceal the fact that William, Earl of Shelburne, nominated him to the see of Llandaff only because he hugged himself with the hope that he might become a useful partisan, and that he might write an occasional pamphlet in defence of the Ministry. Dr. Johnson, whom no one will suspect of being a weak-kneed churchman, was forced to confess that in his day few clergy were raised to the episcopal bench for learning and piety, their only chance of promotion being a connection with someone who possessed parliamentary interest.[1] Latitudinarian views were those which commended themselves most to those who had the ordering of the estate of prelacy, combined with pulpit oratory of a kind calculated to hurl denunciations against zeal and enthusiasm, and to inspire a strong affection for 'our glorious Constitution in Church and State.' Moreover, the episcopal bench was not always pervaded by the odour either of sanctity or of orthodoxy, and the preachers of Arianism and of Socinianism, and even the philosophical unbelievers who impugned Church doctrines, found a secret disciple in more than one time-serving prelate.

It is easy to see what a crop of evils this system produced. The chief pastors of the Church became scandalously neglectful of the dioceses committed to their charge, though it may be doubted whether any carried their negligence to such a shameful extent as Bishop Watson. That prelate was elevated to the see of Llandaff, on the recommendation of Lord Shelburne, in 1782, and, as there was no residence for him in the cathedral city, he from that time till 1816 resided on the margin of one of the lakes in Westmoreland, whither he required all his candidates for ordination, many of whom could ill afford the expense of the journey, to repair. Dr. Watson, on his elevation to the episcopate, had denounced the gross and scandalous practice of non-residence in the House of Lords, but when he came to review his own career, instead of lament-

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, c. xlix.

ing his absence of twenty years from the diocese of which he had been constituted the overseer, complacently stated, in his autobiography, that his life had 'been spent partly in supporting the religion and constitution of the country by seasonable publications, and principally in building farmhouses, blasting rocks, enclosing wastes; in making bad land good; in planting larches; and in planting in the hearts of his children principles of piety, of benevolence, and of self-government.' Matters had come to a pretty pass when the stately halls of the archiepiscopal palace at Lambeth, under the primacy of Archbishop Cornwallis, were on Sundays the scene of routs and balls, presided over by his grace's spouse, so notorious as to draw down a remonstrance from King George III., couched in the following terms :—

My good Lord Prelate,—I could not delay giving you the notification of the grief and concern with which my breast was affected at receiving authentic information that routs have made their way into your palace. At the same time I must signify to you my sentiments on the subject, which hold these levities and vain dissipations as utterly inexpedient, if not unlawful, to pass in a residence for many years devoted to divine studies, religious retirement, and the extensive exercises of charity and benevolence; I add, in a place where so many of your preuecessors have led their lives in such sanctity as has thrown lustre on the pure religion they professed and adorned. From the dissatisfaction with which you must perceive I behold these improprieties, not to speak in harsher terms, and on still more pious principles, I trust you will suppress them immediately, so that I may not have occasion to show any further marks of my displeasure, or to interpose in a different manner. May God take your grace into His almighty protection. I remain, my Lord Primate, your gracious Friend, G. R.[1]

The infrequency with which even clergy who desired to do so enjoyed the counsel and advice of their diocesan begat estrangement, and a curious instance of the great gulf which was fixed, or rather which the laity supposed to be fixed, between bishops and presbyters is afforded in the pages of the 'Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs' of Joseph Cradock, who states that on one occasion he went to hear William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, who had been invited to preach

[1] Quoted from *Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon*, by Ryle; *Christian Leaders of Last Century*, p. 17.

the anniversary sermon on behalf of the London Hospital, in the church of St. Lawrence Jewry, by the Guildhall, whither crowds had been attracted in the preceding century to hear the lectures of Archbishop Tillotson.

I was introduced (says Cradock) into the vestry-room by a friend, where the Lord Mayor and several of the governors of the hospital were waiting for the Duke of York, who was their president; and in the meantime the bishop did everything in his power to entertain and alleviate their impatience. He was beyond measure condescending and courteous, *and even graciously handed some biscuits and wine on a salver to the curate who was to read prayers.*[1]

Converting their offices into sinecures, the guides of the Church were occasionally to be found on a triennial visitation —a duty which partook more of the character of a stately procession through their dioceses—but more often at Bath or Brighthelmstone, or, more oftener still, as Lord Chesterfield said, 'with the most indefatigable industry and insatiable greediness darkening in clouds the levées of kings and ministers.' The Rev. Francis Kilvert, in his 'Life of Richard Bishop of Worcester, 1781 to 1808,' says that his lordship

always preserved a kind of dignified state in his equipage and household, not from any taste or value for such appendages in themselves, but because he considered them as belonging to his station and necessary to maintain an outward respect for it. Although the castle at Hartlebury is not above a quarter of a mile from the parish church, it was his practice to the last to go thither in his coach with his servants in their dress liveries.[2]

Even the most zealous prelates of the Georgian era rested content with holding, as a mere matter of form, a triennial visitation, and with administering the rites of confirmation and ordination at the times appointed, and difficulties in the way of removing dozens of claret vexed their souls infinitely more than the spiritual welfare of their dioceses, for which, on bended knee, they had solemnly sworn before God diligently to care.[3] That, in the absence of an efficient episcopal superintendence and control, much grievous neglect should have been fostered, and that, left to their own devices, the clergy should have been guilty

[1] *Cradock's Memoirs*, ed Nicholls, i. p. 186.
[2] *Memoirs of Life and Correspondence of Hurd*, p. 200.
[3] Twiss's *Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon*, i. 176.

of many and gross irregularities in the discharge of their ministerial functions, was only natural. For this reason the episcopal charges of a few who were not altogether dead to a sense of the grave responsibility which their exalted station imposed upon them abound in complaints, remonstrances, and exhortations, all arising out of the complete omission by some, and the unsatisfactory performance by others, of the duties devolving upon the parochial clergy. The initiatory sacrament of the Christian Covenant was either neglected or, if performed, was performed privately, and in such a manner that the one end and aim was to get through it in the least possible time. Public catechising in the church and the private visitation of the sick were neglected. The performance of the marriage and burial services was marred by the greatest slovenliness. Sunday schools can hardly be said to have existed ; confirmations were held once in three years, and sometimes septennially ; the celebration of the Holy Communion was confined, as a rule, to the three great festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. It was only to be expected from this lack of adequate episcopal supervision that the standard of spiritual attainment among the clergy was low, and that the view which they generally took of their sacred calling was also low, leading them to discharge their duties in a manner the opposite of efficient. Thus 'an excessive love of preferment and culpable inactivity in performing the duties of their office' became the principal characteristics of the clerical order. The Church societies were regarded with lamentable indifference, doubtless because the nature of their operations, and even their very principles and objects, were either wholly or else imperfectly understood. The office of rural dean was nothing more than a name, and clerical meetings, designed with the objects of conference and common edification, had to wait for the Oxford movement. Meanwhile, the hungry sheep looked up and were not fed, and sought in the pastures of Methodism, as it gained ground in the land, that spiritual nourishment which was denied them in the pastures of the National Church.

I must say (was the expression of Bishop Burnet) the main body of our English clergy has always appeared dead and lifeless

to me, and instead of animating one another, they rather seem to lay one another asleep. I have observed the clergy in all the places through which I have travelled—Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, Dissenters—but of all of them our clergy are most remiss in their labours in private, and the least severe in their lives.[1]

It is not to be wondered at in such a state of affairs that those who came forward with the view of effacing the proofs of revelation, or of discrediting its doctrines, were received with admiration among the licentious and the inconsiderate. It is not to be wondered at that, in the midst of an illiterate clergy, there was a wholesale dissemination of infidel principles. There can be no doubt that it was the knowledge of the fact that few were acquainted with the writings of the primitive fathers which led the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire to vitiate them for the purpose of casting a reproach upon Christianity, and it was, doubtless, the knowledge of the same fact that prompted Dr. Joseph Priestley, at a much later period, to pen his reckless assertions respecting the divinity of the Son.

Church preferment was bestowed chiefly in regard to some political or family influence. The occupants of the episcopal bench would seem to have had no consciences in the disposition of their patronage, or, if they had, they stifled them. They regarded it simply as the means of benefiting their families and friends. To cures of souls and cathedral stalls it was their customary plan to present their sons and their nephews, and, in default of these, their examining chaplains, or their college friends. Clerical non-residence was the rule, and the pastoral care of the parishioners was confided to a curate, whose services were enlisted at a stipend oftentimes far lower than that which was received by a groom or a coachman. But residence, even in that case, was not compulsory; and when, as often happened, it was the duty of the priest to serve two, or even three, churches on the seventh day, riding post haste from village to village, mounting and dismounting at the church door, if the waters were out, or the roads impassable, it would end in the congregation being deprived of his ministrations for, at least, a month at a time.

[1] *History of My Own Time*, vi. 183.

What is more strange is that the idea seems to have been entertained by rulers that non-residence on the part of the clergy was a necessary evil. Archdeacon Paley, in a charge delivered to the clergy of Carlisle in 1785, advised those who could not talk to their parishioners, and non-resident incumbents, 'to distribute the tracts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge;' and Dr. Samuel Horsley, in a charge delivered to the clergy of Rochester in 1796, not only expressed his conviction that many non-residents were 'promoting the general cause of Christianity, and, perhaps, doing better service than if they confined themselves to the ordinary labours of the ministry,' but asserted that 'it would be no less impolitic than harsh to call such to residence,' and that 'other considerations made non-residence a thing to be connived at.'[1]

William Whiston, in his autobiography, cites a passage from a letter which he had received from a friend resident in the north of England, giving an account of 'the offence and scandal given by the shameful non-residence of bishops and the neglect of their dioceses:'—

> For near two years past (he wrote) there hath not one bishop appeared among us in all the north part of England. With what grace can non-resident bishops reprove non-resident clergy? Mutual connivance is necessary. The word 'incumbent' too frequently loses its name. I could give you instances of rectors who have not, like a certain bishop, set foot on their rectories for six years together, and of another living, near me, on which there has been neither resident rector nor resident curate for above twelve years.[2]

In one diocese in the closing years of last century, containing upwards of two hundred benefices, more than a half enjoyed the presence of neither incumbent nor curate, many of the former being non-resident without either the consent or the knowledge of the diocesan.

Dr. Thomas Newton, who occupied the see of Bristol from 1761 to 1782, records in his autobiography some significant facts respecting clerical non-residence in the second seaport of the kingdom in the reign of George III. By constant

[1] Paley's *Charges*, *Works*, xii.; Horsley's *Charges*, pp. 83, 84.

[2] *Whiston's Memoirs*, p. 156. See also Lord Gambier's *Memorials*, i. 179.

residence in the cathedral city he had indulged a hope that his example would have induced the cathedral dignitaries to reside also, and discharge at least their statutable duties. At this time the income yielded by the deanery was 500*l.* per annum, and that of the prebendaries about half that sum, the term of residence required being three months in each year for the former, and six weeks for each of the latter. 'But, alas!' he exclaims, 'never was church more shamefully neglected. The bishop has several times been there for months together without seeing the face of dean or prebendary, or anything better than a minor canon. The care and management of the church were left to Mr. Camplin, precentor, or senior minor canon, and to the sexton.'[1]

The cathedral church of Rochester was in a like predicament. The holder of a prebendal stall in that cathedral, dining with Bishop Pearce, was asked when it was that he usually went into residence. 'Oh, my lord,' said he, 'I reside there the better part of the year.' 'I am very glad to hear it,' replied the good bishop, in blissful ignorance of the fact that the respondent resided in Rochester only during the week of the Audit.[2] Even when prelates did reside they did not like it. William Warburton, while Bishop of Gloucester, complained that 'the inconvenience of that public station' prevented him from bestowing attention upon his books, and Dr. Secker could view his summer visit to Cuddesdon Palace in no better light than that of 'a delightful retirement for his favourite studies.'[3]

One of the most cultivated thinkers of the present age, in speaking of the characteristics of the religious reaction, has said that 'there were, during the first half of the century, many religious leaders whose devotion has not been exceeded in more recent times.'[4] Among those named are Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne; Butler, Bishop of Durham; Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man; William Law, author of 'A Serious Call;' Lardner, and Clarke; to whom might be added the Rev. William Jones, of Nayland

[1] *Life and Anecdotes*, p. 95.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 96.
[3] Porteus's *Life of Secker*, p. 61.
[4] *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 384.

in Suffolk. Of the third of these, Mr. Stephen gives a most interesting sketch :—

'Wilson the Apostolic' was a man of the old sacerdotal type, full of simplicity, tenderness, devotion, and with a sincere belief, inoffensive because alloyed by no tincture of pride or ambition, in the sacred privileges of the Church. Among his scattered reflections there are many of much beauty in expression as in sentiment. They imply a theology of that type of which à-Kempis is the permanent representative ; less ascetic, inasmuch as Wilson had the good fortune to be a married man instead of a monk, and, of course, less vivid, as he was one born out of due time. His superstitions—for he is superstitious—no more provoke anger than the simple fancies of a child ; and we honour him as we should honour all men whose life and thoughts were in perfect harmony, and guided by noble motives. To read him is to love him : he helps us to recognise the fact that many of the thoughts which supported his noble nature in its journey through life may be applicable in a different costume to the sorrows and trials, which also change their form rather than their character. . . . His example proves conclusively that a genuine Christian theologian, in the most characteristic sense of the term, might still be found under the reign of George II. in the Isle of Man.[1]

Well would it have been for the English Church of the eighteenth century if the mantle of Bishop Wilson had fallen upon the shoulders of half even of her chief pastors, for then assuredly would she have been cleansed from some at least of those evils with which she entered upon the succeeding century. The second half of the eighteenth century had bright stars among the clergy shining out few and far between—men who saved the Church from the danger which menaced her of the removal of her candlestick. Here and there, anchored in lonely parishes, might have been found men who, both by their preaching and living, taught their little congregations to reverence whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely and of good report ; men who added sunlight to daylight by making the happy happier. Foremost among these stands Gilbert White, who for forty years scarcely stirred from the boundaries of Selborne, an obscure hamlet on the borders of a barren heath among the chalky downs of Hampshire, of which he held the incumbency,

[1] Stephen's *Hist. of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i. c. xii. pp. 384–5.

employing his leisure hours most innocently and happily for himself, and most instructively for the world, in the observation and description of nature. Wandering about the lanes and dingles of sequestered Selborne, the worthy philosophic divine watched the migration of birds, the instincts of animals, the blossoming of flowers and plants, and the humblest phenomena of insect life, diligently recording all his observations in the letters that he addressed to his friends Thomas Pennant and Daines Barrington, and which were afterwards collected into a volume that now fills a place on the library shelves of every naturalist. Then there was James Hervey, the friend of Wesley, who was rector of Weston Favell, in the county of Northampton, where he composed his well-known 'Meditations among the Tombs'—a divine who certainly allured his flock to brighter worlds if he did not lead the way. There was also the Rev. Thomas Twining, vicar of White Notley, Essex, and rector of St. Mary's, Colchester, from 1772—a divine who divided his time equally between his parochial ministrations and his books. Twining was not only a student of Chaucer at the time when his works were not so easily accessible as they are now, but took great delight in music, corresponded regularly with Dr. Burney, the historian of the art, composed very respectable verses, translated the 'Poetics' of Aristotle, and, in a word, strove to keep himself abreast of the mental culture of the age.

Some few there were of the type of the Rev. William Grimshaw, incumbent of Haworth, a remote village surrounded by barren mountains and bleak moors, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, from 1742 to 1763—a man of whom it could be said, 'no parishioner after his death could hear his name mentioned without tears;'[1] and his name suggests that of John Crosse, vicar of Bradford, and that of Henry Venn, vicar of Huddersfield—two men burning with a fiery zeal for the salvation of souls—who exercised a widespread influence as preachers in the West Riding, drawing crowds, as Grimshaw did, from long distances to hear them. But while such men, and some others whom it would be easy to mention—men who were to a certain

[1] Hardy, *Life of William Grimshaw*, p. 249.

extent the salt of their order in the day and generation in which they lived—might then have been found, they were necessarily exceptional. 'If the whole body of the clergy were like ourselves,' said an old Surrey fox-hunting parson, in defending the character of Henry Venn from the aspersions of some of his brethren at a clerical meeting, 'the world would see that we were of no use, and take away our tithes; but a few of these pious ones redeem our credit, and save for us our livings.'[1] The zeal and activity with which Venn had discharged the duties of his cure at West Horsley, in Surrey, was the means of giving offence to some of the neighbouring clergy, who evinced little or no interest in the spiritual welfare of their parishioners, and occasioned them to brand him as an enthusiast and a Methodist!

George Whitefield, shortly after his ordination in 1736, for two months, in the absence of the rector, Mr. Kitchen, afterwards Dean of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, undertook duty at Dummer, a small village not far from Basingstoke, in Hampshire, where he found, to his no small satisfaction, that the parishioners had been in the habit of receiving daily visits from their pastor, that the young had been catechised every day, and that the parishioners always attended matins before proceeding to their toil, and attended evensong before going home. This, however, was an exception. Unfortunately it cannot be said of the average country parson of the eighteenth century, as Chaucer was able to say of the parish priest of his day, that

> Christës love and hys Apostles twelve
> He taught, but first he folowed it himselve—

but rather that he entered the temple and drove out the worshippers, and that he indulged in constant beatific visions of ultimately resting his weary limbs—weary through inactivity—

> In stall thick litter'd, or on mitred throne.

Though the general feeling of the country (wrote the late rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, in reference to the first half of the century) was sufficiently decided to oblige all who wished to write against Christianity to do so under a mask, this was not the case

[1] *Life of Venn*, p. 14.

with the attacks upon the clergy. Since the days of the Lollards there had never been a time when the established ministers of religion were held in so much contempt as in the Hanoverian period, or when satire upon churchmen was so congenial to general feeling. This, too, was the more extraordinary as there was no feeling against the Church Establishment, nor was nonconformity as a theory ever less in favour. The contempt was for the persons, manners, and character of the ecclesiastics.[1]

It has been too much the fashion to write down the portraits of clerics which are to be found in the writings of eighteenth-century essayists and novelists as caricatures. That they cannot be regarded as caricatures of the London clergy is undoubtedly true, but certainly not of the rural clergy, after duly taking into consideration their status and their surroundings. Then it ceases to be strange that Roderick Random was not at all surprised to find a cheat in canonicals in the village inn, though he was surprised at the indecorum of which he was guilty, in the scandal that he talked of his vicar, in the oaths that he swore, and in the songs that he sung. The divine was Mr. Shuffle, curate of a neighbouring parish, who could shift a card with such dexterity that it was impossible to discover him.[2] In 'Tom Jones,' Fielding depicts Mr. Supple, the curate, and Squire Western, as engaging in 'a most excellent political discourse framed out of newspapers and political pamphlets; in which they made a libation of four bottles of wine to the good of their country.'[3] Goldsmith devotes No. 58 of his Chinese essays to a description of a visitation dinner, which was composed of three courses, and lasted as many hours, till the whole of the company, from the lord bishop of the diocese down to the Rev. Dr. Marrowfat, 'were unable to swallow or utter anything more.'[4] Colman and Thornton have limned a typical country parson of this period in their sketch of the Rev. Jack Quickset (rector of ——, parish in the North Riding, a living worth upwards of three hundred pounds per annum), a divine who saw 'his dearest action on the field,'

[1] *Essays and Reviews*, p. 315.
[2] *Roderick Random*, c. x.
[3] *Tom Jones*, iv. c. x.
[4] *Cit. of the World*, ed. Cunningham, ii., 281. See also the *Literary Recollections* of the Rev. Richard Warner, i 302–7; and Crabbe's *Borough* and *Parish Register*.

and who boasted that he had in his stable a brace of hunters as good as ever leg was laid over—whose life was mostly spent in hunting and shooting—who found the Sunday dull and tedious, and who made up for the loss of it 'by going out a-cock-shooting very early the next morning.' The sketch of this divine, which was contributed to the 'Connoisseur' for January 29, 1756, concludes with the remark that the country could furnish many instances of such ordained sportsmen, whose thoughts were more taken up with the stable or the dog-kennel than the church, and that Jack and all his stamp were 'regarded by their parishioners, not as parsons of the parish, but rather as squires-in-orders.'

The country parson regarded his office as very little better than a sinecure, and, cut off from all refining influences, too often found the acme of pleasure in joining the neighbouring farmers in a bout at the village alehouse, and as often indulged so freely that it was with difficulty that he could stagger to his vicarage. If this be doubted, hear what Arthur Young says in reference to the clergy of the Gallican church on the eve of the Revolution of 1789 :—

> The French clergy preserved, what is not always preserved in England, an exterior decency of behaviour. One did not find among them poachers or fox-hunters, who having spent the morning in scampering after the hounds, dedicate the evening to the bottle, and reel from inebriety to the pulpit. Such advertisements were never seen in France as I have heard of in England: 'Wanted, a curacy in a good sporting country, where the duty is light and the neighbourhood convivial.' [1]

John Forster, in his instructive biography of Goldsmith, has commended to the study of those who would fain accuse Fielding and the novelists of exaggeration in their word portraits of Anglican divines, the Rev. Dr. Warner. This cassock-wearing scapegrace, as the reader may possibly remember, was one of the bosom friends of George Selwyn, and a considerable number of his letters to that typical specimen of a fine gentleman of the eighteenth century are preserved in the published correspondence of the latter. Forster says no more than

[1] *Travels in France*, 1789, p. 543.

the truth when he asserts that he who peruses these letters will gather from them that Dr. Warner was

> quite an ornament to the Establishment . . . and only cursing, flinging, stamping, or gnashing, when anything goes amiss with Selwyn. He will observe the reverend doctor is ready to wager his best cassock against a dozen of claret any day, and that the holy man would quote you even texts with the most pious of his cloth. In short, at whatever page he opens the 'Correspondence,' he will find parson Warner in the highest possible spirits, whether quizzing 'canting, pot-bellied justices,' contemplating with equanimity 'a fine corpse at Surgeons' Hall,' or looking with hopeful vivacity to the time when he shall 'be a fine grey-headed old jollocks of sixty-five.'[1]

Voltaire, in the fifth of his letters to his friend Thiriot, during his stay in England between the latter end of 1728 and 1731, says that 'with regard to the morals of the English clergy, they are more regular than those of France,'[2] a state of affairs which he had attributed to their ranks being recruited as a general rule from those who graduated in the universities of either Oxford or Cambridge. Against this must be placed the testimony of Dr. Alexander Carlyle, minister of Inveresk, who states, in the memorials of the men and events of his time, that when he visited Harrogate, in the summer of 1763, the spa abounded with more clergymen than he had ever seen before, and that he was enabled to form a correct opinion of them. His impression was that they were 'in general divided into bucks and prigs, of which the first, though inconceivably ignorant, and sometimes indecent in their morals, he yet held to be most tolerable because they were unassuming, and had no other affectation but that of behaving themselves like gentlemen. The other division of them, the prigs, were truly not to be endured, for they were but half-learned, ignorant of the world, narrow-minded, pedantic, and overbearing.'[3] They tippled and hunted with the squirearchy, and their detestation of anything that savoured of Rome was as great as their detestation of anything that savoured of Geneva. When they preached, the effect was akin to that which Charles Churchill unblush-

[1] Forster's *Life of Goldsmith*, b. iii. 256.
[2] *Letters concerning the English Nation.* Lett. v. 39.
[3] *Autob. of Dr. Carlyle*, p. 441.

ingly averred happened at such times as he occupied the pulpit of St. John's Church, Westminster, 1758:—

> I kept those sheep
> Which for my curse I was ordained to keep,
> Ordained, alas! to keep through need, not choice;
> Those sheep which never heard their shepherd's voice,
> Which did not know, yet would not learn, their way,
> Which stray'd themselves, yet griev'd that I should stray.
> . . . . . .
> While, sacred dulness ever in my view,
> Sleep at my bidding crept from pew to pew.

Dr. Knox, headmaster of Tunbridge School, himself a divine of the English Church, had certainly no very exalted opinion of the Anglican clergy of the closing years of the eighteenth century, otherwise he would not have written as he did that the public of his day had 'long remarked with indignation that some of the most distinguished coxcombs, drunkards, debauchees, and gamesters, who figure at the watering places, and all public places of resort, were young men of the sacerdotal order.'[1]

As late as the closing decades of the century, the poet Cowper has nothing better to say of the average parish priest, in poems which were revised by so rigid a censor as the Rev. John Newton, than that he is—

> Loose in morals, and in manners vain,
> In conversation frivolous, in dress
> Extreme; at once rapacious and profuse,
> Frequent in park with lady at his side,
> Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes,
> But rare at home and never at his books;

while in another place he speaks of

> The *things* that mount the rostrum with a skip
> And then skip down again, pronounce a text,
> Cry, hem! and reading what they never wrote,
> Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
> And with a well-bred whisper close the scene.

In 1781 it was possible for the same writer, without fear of contradiction, to pen such lines as these:—

[1] Knox's *Essays*, p. 18.

> Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,
> Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest;

and for one who in many respects resembled him to say of the parson of his 'Village,' that it was his custom to give 'to fields the morning and to feasts the night.'

The ignorance of the very title deeds of the Christian faith which candidates for the sacred office were wont to display in the eighteenth century must have been appalling. Nothing grieved the soul of Bishop Burnet, during his tenure of the see of Salisbury, so much as this. It forms the text of one of his jeremiads in the new preface which he wrote for the third edition of his 'Pastoral Care,' published in 1713. 'Our Ember weeks,' he wrote, 'are the burden and grief of my life.'[1] And no wonder, seeing that those candidates who presented themselves never appeared to have read the Old Testament, and were unable to give any account, or at least a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the Gospels, or the Catechism itself. 'They cry, and think it a sad disgrace to be denied orders, though the ignorance of some is such that in a well-regulated state of things they would appear not knowing enough to be admitted to the holy Sacrament.' Burnet states that it often tore his heart to find that the case was very little better when those who had been admitted to holy orders presented themselves for institution to benefices, since they failed to show 'that they had either read the Scriptures or any one good book since they were ordained.' The bishop did, indeed, admit that 'clamours of scandal in any of the clergy were not frequent,' but he was forced to confess at the same time that 'a remiss, unthinking course of life, with little or no application to study, and the bare performing of that which, if not done, would draw censures when complained of, without ever pursuing the duties of the pastoral care in any suitable degree, was but too common as well as too evident.'[2] This preface was dated from Salisbury, November 15, 1712. It might have been written half a century later, for there can be little doubt that the members of the episcopate were too much occupied with the

[1] *New Preface to Discourse of the Pastoral Care*, 1713, p. 5.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 7.

worship of Mammon to have directed their energies towards rectifying the deficiencies of the ordination system.

In those days of frozen lifelessness and dignified episcopal sloth no story is quite devoid of credit which has any reference to the laxity in the matter of ordination. That, for instance, which says of Brownlow North, Bishop of Winchester, that he upon one occasion examined his candidates for ordination in a field during the progress of a cricket match, is in all probability not altogether destitute of foundation. Neither is that told to Boswell by a divine of his acquaintance, who, when he presented himself to the Archbishop of York (Dr. Drummond), was asked what books of divinity he had been studying, replied—'Why truly, my lord, I must tell you frankly none at all, though I have read other books enough.' 'Very well,' answered his Grace, 'I will give you a letter to one who will examine you properly.' The candidate was requested by this 'one' to pen an essay on the necessity of a Mediator. Not quite grasping what the examiner meant, 'he wrote some strange stuff as fast as he would do a card to a lady; and had never read the Greek Testament.' John Newton, the friend of Cowper, says that his examination by Dr. Green, Bishop of Lincoln, at Buckden, in 1764, prior to his ordination to the curacy of Olney, 'lasted about an hour, chiefly upon the principal heads of divinity.'[1] The consequence of this system was that candidates who were ill-qualified in point of both character and attainments experienced the greatest ease in obtaining holy orders on ostensible nominations to cures which they had not the slightest intention of serving, or which they undertook for the sake of the title to serve for a time without stipend, or for a stipend exceedingly small. It was often the case that unfit or unworthy candidates, desirous of avoiding the inconvenience of examination and the possibility of rejection, furnished with fictitious titles and testimonials, applied for orders during the intervals of the periodical ordinations of the diocesans under whom they intended to serve, and by this means frequently succeeded in obtaining letters dimissory to some other bishop.

[1] Cecil's *Memoir of Newton*, p. 133.

Not until the social condition of England had been materially affected by the low tone of religion and morality, which thoughtful men expected could hardly go lower, was the religious revival by Whitefield and Wesley, characterised by Mr. Leslie Stephen as 'in many respects by far the most important phenomenon of the century,' initiated.[1] By their light much of the black moral gloom which enveloped society was dissipated; by them a great impulse was given to a change in the popular mind, which visibly affected both the pulpit and the newspaper press, and made itself felt in new sentiments and opinions throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Wesley's preaching, the force of his reasoning, the practical character both of his means and of his object, and the persuasive earnestness and simplicity of his style, combined to command the attention, to conciliate the feeling, and finally to convince and convert to the vital truths which he inculcated many on whom a drier, a more doctrinal, and a more argumentative appeal might have been made in vain. It was in Methodism that

> the instincts of the human soul, so disregarded by the tedious and formal English worship, the yearning for what nothing on this side the grave can give, found what the clergy of the eighteenth century did not pretend to offer. The profound speculations and subtle logic of Clarke and Butler were not intended for the colliers down whose blackened cheeks the tears furrowed channels as they listened for the first time to Wesley, when he raised in them the consciousness that they too, whom no Anglican dignitary had ever condescended to address, were nevertheless of large discourse, looking before and after.[2]

The Methodist revival sprang, as has been recognised by Mr. Tyerman, the most recent historian of it, from the numerous societies for the reformation of manners, corresponding very much to the religious guilds of our own day, which had been formed in the closing decades of the seventeenth century. The attitude which the members of these societies, both the clerical and lay, assumed was decidedly an aggressive one, and it was their endeavour, misguided as it cannot be denied they

[1] Stephen's *Hist. Eng. Thought in Eighteenth Cent.* ii. 389.
[2] Phillimore's *Hist. Reign of George III.* i. 39.

were, to bring penal coercion to bear upon all people guilty of profaneness and immorality. These religious societies were not confined to the capital, they were to be found in different towns throughout the kingdom, all acting substantially according to the same rules and regulations. They met to pray, to sing psalms, and to read the Scriptures together; and to reprove, to exhort, and to edify one another by religious conference. They also carried out designs of charity, such as supporting lectures and daily prayers in churches, releasing imprisoned debtors, relieving the poor, and sending their children to school.[1] It was among the members of these societies that Methodism first took root, and it was by their means that the success of the revival was ultimately ensured.

Employing the methods of two saintly friars who flourished five centuries before his time, and whose fame is still kept green as Saints Dominic and Francis, the new apostle despatched pairs of poor itinerant preachers of truth and righteousness to all parts of the kingdom in exactly the same way as St. Dominic had done before him, when he had recognised the unpalatable truth that the existing machinery of the parochial organisation of the church had utterly failed in consequence of the indolence and worldliness of the parochial clergy. With the self-same success with which St. Dominic's exertions were rewarded Wesley's exertions were rewarded—violent opposition from all whose laziness, caution, or respectability would not allow them to countenance the profession of religion either in themselves or in anyone else. The Wesleyan class-meetings, with their rules for common improvement, were placed under the direction of the preachers in the same way that St. Francis had prescribed in the countries which owned the Latin obedience. Very little encouragement did the exertions of St. Francis meet with in high quarters, and very little did those of Wesley, who failed to command the sympathies, but certainly earned plenty of sneers, hooting, and ridicule, not only from all such as gloried in deriding what they were pleased to term 'the religious overmuch,' but even from some church dignitaries, who, by heaping all the obloquy they could upon them, by ex-

[1] Tyerman's *Life and Times of Wesley*, i. 254.

aggerating their failings, by ridiculing their virtues, by scrupling at no falsehood, and by rejecting no fiction however gross and palpable, contributed indirectly to the formation of a vast Separatist communion.

A few brief notes upon the subject of the church fabrics and services of the age under consideration may fittingly be introduced here. In connection with the former nothing is more striking to modern church-folk, who are accustomed to see things done generally decently and in order, than the extraordinary ideas which people then possessed on the subject of their preservation and maintenance. They do not appear to have entertained the slightest reverential regard for the buildings in which they worshipped, and in consequence of the prevalence of such ideas, by far the greater number of country churches, more especially those in places far removed from episcopal control and archidiaconal visitation, exhibited, from the beginning to the end of the eighteenth century, a most disgracefully neglected condition. Bishop Secker commented severely upon this in a charge delivered in 1750 to the clergy of the diocese of Oxford :—

> I believe, indeed (said he), that the chancels which belong to incumbents will be generally found in the best condition of any. Yet some, even of these, I fear, have scarce been kept in necessary present repair, and others by no means duly cleared from annoyances which must gradually bring them to decay ; water undermining and rotting the foundations, earth heaped up against the outside, weeds and shrubs growing upon them, or trees too near them. Where sufficient attention is paid to these things, too frequently the floors are meanly paved or the walls dirty or patched, or the windows ill-glazed, and it may be in part stopt up, or the roof not ceiled ; or they are damp, offensive, and unwholesome, for want of a due circulation of air.[1]

Any intelligent stranger in England would have realised the truth of these observations in an eminent degree. Intent, perhaps, upon seeing the interior of some grand old parish church, he procured after much difficulty the key, and entered its portals with the conviction that the abomination of desolation had taken possession of the holy place indelibly stamped upon his mind—the 'high-embowed roof,' in a

[1] Secker's *Charges*, 3rd ed. 1780. *Charge* 4, p. 153.

miserable state of dilapidation, and verily a place where the sparrow had found her an house and the swallow a nest wherein she had laid her young—the walls 'like a large map, portioned out into capes, seas, and promontories by the various colours by which the damp had stained them'—some of the windows blocked up, and a few others, storied and richly dight, remaining as mute witnesses of better days—a holy table of mean construction standing in the accustomed place in the chancel hemmed closely in by the communion rails and barely covered with a dirty moth-eaten cloth—the sacrarium itself the receptacle of lumber—the font ornamented with dead bats and choked up with rubbish—an excellent representation of the fierce combat waged by the lion and the unicorn for the possession of the crown—the all-important notice setting forth 'that this church was re-pewed and beautified A.D. 17—, Samuel Daub and Josiah Whitewash, churchwardens;' and every available inch of space occupied by those vile incumbrances known as high, square, curtained pews to which church-goers in the Georgian era were devotedly attached for no other reason than that they constituted excellent sleeping compartments and convenient places where flirtations could be carried on. Swift in one of his satirical poems declared that one of the plagues of a country life was a church without pews, and that their chief utility consisted in 'lodging folks disposed to sleep'[1]—a utility which they served most admirably if William Hogarth's clever picture of 'The Sleeping Congregation' may be taken as a fair sample of the effect. So much exclusiveness was carried by society into the house of prayer at that time that probably Fielding was not exaggerating when in his novel of 'Joseph Andrews,' describing Lady Booby's visit to church—her ladyship being no very regular churchwoman—she occupied a pew 'which the congregation could not see into.' Describing the principal objects of interest in Gloucester Cathedral, in a letter to Richard Bentley bearing date September 1753, Horace Walpole says that it contained a 'modernity' which beat all antiquities for curiosity:—

[1] *Baucis and Philemon.* [2] *Joseph Andrews*, book iv. c. 1.

Just by the high altar (he wrote) is a small pew hung with green damask, with curtains of the same; a small corner cupboard, painted, carved, and gilt, for books in one corner, and two troughs of a birdcage with seeds and water. If any mayoress on earth was small enough to enclose herself in this tabernacle, or abstemious enough to feed on rape and canary, I should have sworn that it was the shrine of the queen of the aldermen. It belongs to a Mrs. Cotton, who having lost a favourite daughter is convinced that her soul is transmigrated into a robin redbreast, for which reason she passes her life in making an aviary of the cathedral of Gloucester. The Chapter indulge this whim, as she contributes abundantly to glaze, whitewash, and ornament the church.[1]

In all directions it was the same. Nothing commended itself to churchwardens so much as a universal face of whitewash on the wall surfaces and stone dressings of the interior of a church. An eminent antiquary of his day, Carter, writing in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for 1799, says that the only ecclesiastical structure which had up to that time succeeded in escaping the whitewash deluge was the national Walhalla. There is reason for thankfulness among antiquaries and archæologists for so fortunate an escape.

One of the indispensable ornaments of a church (according to the canons of eighteenth-century taste) has been omitted. It was a gallery, in which, as Fielding is careful to mention, fashionable folk, or rather those who wished to be considered such, strove during service time to exalt themselves as much as possible over the heads of those who made no pretensions to fashion.[2] The black plastered aisles of churches—gloomy at the best of times—were rendered still more so by the frequent erection of unsightly monuments profusely emblazoned with family escutcheons, shields, death's heads and cross-bones, as will be remembered by all those who have ever looked into the early illustrated editions of Hervey's 'Meditations among the Tombs,' or Drelincourt 'On Death.' The deplorable taste which was displayed in these frail memorials did not commend itself to that excellent divine, the Rev. William Jones of Nayland, who, in a brightly written essay, entitled 'Reflections on the Growth of Heathenism among Modern

[1] *Walpole's Letters*, ed. Cunningham, ii. 355.
[2] *Joseph Andrews*, c. xiii.

Christians,' published in 1776, protested most vehemently against the introduction of pagan deities into Christian temples :—

> The fabulous objects of the Grecian mythology (he said) have even got possession of our churches ; in one of which I have seen a monument with elegant figures, as large as life, of the three Fates —Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos—spinning and clipping the thread of a great man's life. . . . In our rural ornaments we have temples to all the pagan deities ; and in the city a pantheon wherein there is a general assembly of all the sons and daughters of pleasure under the auspices of heathen demons. How strange it would have been if, while the temples of the heathens had been dedicated to Venus, Mars, and Bacchus, their gardens had been adorned with statues of Moses and Aaron, and the walls of their houses painted with the destruction of Sodom, the overthrow of Pharaoh, the delivery of the two tables on Mount Sinai, and such like objects of sacred history ![1]

Of the east end of churches at this time, congregations both in town and country could have seen little or nothing, unless they took the trouble to strain their eyes, when they would no doubt have seen what Bishop Newton once humorously styled—

> Moses and Aaron upon a church wall,
> Holding up the commandments for fear they should fall.

The chancel was occupied by a huge unsightly 'combination,' to use an expressive term of the late Mr. Beresford-Hope, known to all lovers of ecclesiastical antiquities as a 'three-decker,' which towered up in three distinct storeys or desks, one for the clerk, another for the curate or reader, and a third for the preacher. The pulpit, which frowned over both 'like a miniature representation of the mountains wherewith the giants failed to scale heaven,'[2] was usually furnished with a huge hourglass by means of which the preacher was enabled to measure the length of his discourse, and sometimes the entire structure was in so rickety a condition, that very little action on the part of its occupant would have been needed to have brought it down about the ears of the congregation.

[1] *Reflections, etc.*, in *The Scholar Armed*, 1795, pp. 271-4.

[2] A. J. Beresford-Hope, *Order and Worship in Church of England*, p. 8.

The ecclesiastical ritual in town and country at that period was of a type which would have made Lancelot Andrewes or the English Cyprian stare and gasp had either been present to witness it. That meek and unaffected grace which the author of the 'Deserted Village' assures his readers was noticeable on the countenance of the rector who was dear to all the country round Auburn, must have been exceptional. The Liturgy was read in a most careless and undevotional tone, whole portions of it, such for instance as the Litany, being sometimes omitted when it suited the convenience of the reader, who was frequently not above interpolating it with extemporaneous petitions. The introduction of unauthorised metrical collections was very common; the celebration of Holy Communion was, as has been stated, painfully infrequent, and when it was celebrated the offertory collection was omitted, and the rubric respecting the administration of the elements infringed by the wholesale distribution of them to railfuls of communicants.

The lot of such as nowadays are heard to complain that the almsbag passes before them too frequently in modern church services, should have been cast in the eighteenth century, since the infrequency of the offertory was then so great in the generality of churches, as to draw forth some remarks upon the subject from the Bishop of Oxford (Dr. Secker), in his second charge, delivered in 1741. 'Though in one or two parishes of this diocese (*i.e.* Oxford), the old custom is retained of oblations for the minister, as well as alms for the poor, to both which the sentences appointed to be read are plainly adapted, yet in many parishes there is no offertory at all.'[1] And if this was the case in the diocese of Oxford, what must it have been elsewhere? Infrequency of the celebration of the communion was great in the same diocese, and it is reasonable to infer that the same prevailed in other dioceses. 'A sacrament,' says Secker, 'might easily be interposed in that long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas, . . . and if afterwards you can advance from a quarterly communion to a monthly one, I make no doubt but you will.'[2] Secker was

[1] *Secker's Eight Charges*, No. 2, p. 63, ed. 1780.
[2] *Ibid.* No. 2, p. 62.

one of the few prelates who were sincerely anxious for the spiritual improvement of his diocese.

It seems to have been the usual practice to preach the ante or rather *anti*-communion service from the reading desk. The learned Dr. Samuel Parr, in enumerating his 'great regulations' in his mode of conducting divine service, introduced by him in 1785, soon after succeeding to the perpetual curacy of Heath-town or Hatton, a small village on the Birmingham road a few miles out of Warwick, specifies among the number, as if it were one remarkable and altogether unprecedented—'communion service at the altar.'[1] In the majority of churches a kneeling posture would seem to have been of such rare occurrence as to evoke surprise. Miss Jane Austen, the novelist, thought it worth while to record that upon a certain occasion her brother, Admiral Francis Austen, while attending service in a church in a seaside town, was *the* officer who kneeled at church,[2] and the Rev. Charles Simeon, Fellow of King's College and Incumbent of Trinity Church, Cambridge, one of the bright and shining lights of the Evangelical school in the closing decades of the century, records in his 'Diary,' under date of March 8, 1780, that he 'kneeled down before service;'[3] and what is more astounding (at least to modern ideas) that he failed to see 'any impropriety in it.'

In regard to vestments, it is hardly necessary to say more than that the cope was worn on all festival days at Durham, where the ritual was slightly more ornate than elsewhere, until 1784. Defoe describes some copes which were worn by some of the cathedral staff in 1722, the date of his visit, as 'rich with embroidery and embossed work of silver.'[4] The full surplice, opening down the front, with very wide sleeves and hood, graced the form of a clergyman at the times of his ministration—the former, it is to be feared, too commonly in country districts 'as dirty as a farmer's frock,' as Cowper said of some that he had seen in his rural peregrinations[5]—and was invariably ex-

[1] Johnstone's *Life of Dr. Parr.*
[2] *Memoirs of Jane Austen*, by J. E. Austen-Leigh, ed. 1871, p. 13.
[3] *Memoirs*, p. 19.
[4] Defoe's *Tour*, iii. 189.
[5] *Conn.* No. 134

changed for the Calvinistic gown, full sleeves and band, before he mounted the pulpit, in which wigs were of course always worn.

A fashionable church in the eighteenth century, if we may trust descriptions, was a convenient resort for whispering scandal, for displaying skill in the management of the fan, and for exhibiting diamonds and 'lace heads;' besides affording a fine gentleman a good opportunity of putting a modest girl to the blush by staring at her through a spyglass. In short, a church was regarded as anything but a place for prayer or even for religious oratory.[1] That this was so is borne out by all the pictures in the poetical and prose literature of the age. The behaviour of the congregation, even in such fashionable temples as Rowland Hill's chapel and St. George's, Hanover Square, was characterised by much that was unseemly and irreverent. 'The divorce of the knees from the hassock,' as the poet Cowper neatly expresses it, was the general rule, and while some worshippers would sit during the singing of the psalms and stand during the repetition of the prayers, others resumed their seats at the recitation of the creed, preparatory to a doze through the sermon. Congregations often remained mute at such times as they should have responded, and the clerk was commonly regarded as the mouthpiece of all the rest.

The glory attaching to the office of parish clerk has long since departed, and the eighteenth century may be considered as its golden age, when, as Cowper says, it would have been difficult sometimes to tell exactly who was regarded with the greatest veneration in some country parishes, the parson or his clerk, seeing that, in addition to acting as sponsor to 'all the new-born bantlings,' and *in loco parentis* to all the rustic brides, it was his duty to read the lessons from the lowest tier of the three-decker, to respond with a sonorous 'Amen' to the prayers, to usher in the sermon with a stave, and, furthermore, in utter defiance of the rubric, which forbade the publication in church during the time of divine service of anything other than what was prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, to notify all

[1] Julia Wedgwood, *John Wesley and the Evangelical Reaction*, p. 136.

sorts of purely secular affairs, such, for instance, as fairs and markets, days of appeal against house or window duties, and even goods stolen or lost. The poetry, the prose, and the art of the time each bear witness to the power that was wielded by the parish clerk. Did not Pope sketch him in the celebrated 'Memoirs of P. P., Clerk of this Parish,' written in almost avowed ridicule of Bishop Burnet's gossiping 'History of His Own Time?'—making him to record with honest pride the fact that he never associated himself with any parish clerks of the land, 'save those who were right worthy in their calling, men of clear and sweet voice, and of becoming gravity'—and that on his election to office he resolutely determined to reform 'the manifold corruptions and abuses which had crept into the church'? With what complacency does 'P. P.' write of his severity in whipping forth dogs from the temple and in tearing from the poor babes (though he confesses it went sorely against his heart) the half-eaten apples which they privily munched at church! With what honest pride he mentions that his hands never wearied of making plain and smooth the dog-ears throughout the great Bible! How touchingly he speaks of the care that he took of the church—of the regularity with which he caused it to be swept every Saturday with a besom, and the pews and benches to be likewise trimmed—(once in three years having been the practice of his predecessor); how he caused the parson's surplice to be neatly darned, washed, and laid in lavender, and sometimes even sprinkled with rose water! How he glories in his detection of a thief by means of a Bible and a key! How pathetically he laments the disuse of wedding sermons! How staggered he confesses he was in his belief and conscience by an Oxford scholar, who proved to him by logic that animals might have souls—and how comforted he was with the reflection that if it really was so, they might be allowed Christian burial, and greatly augment his own fees![1] Those who are familiar with Cowper's minor effusions will remember that on several occasions in the closing decades of the eighteenth century he acted in the capacity of poet laureate to John Cox, parish clerk of All Saints, Northampton; while all readers of

[1] Pope's *Works*, ed. Elwin, x. pp. 435 44.

Crabbe will call to mind his description of Jachin, the conceited parish clerk, whose enemies declared him to be

> An interloper—one who out of place
> Had volunteered upon the side of grace.
> There was his Master ready once a week
> To give advice ; what further need he seek ?
> Amen ! so be it. What had he to do
> With more than that, 'twas insolent and new.[1]

And if from literature we pass to art, shall we not do well to bear in mind that the facile pencil of William Hogarth has limned in bold colours for all time a typical specimen of the eighteenth-century parish clerk in his picture representing a 'Sleeping Congregation' in the year of grace 1736 ?

Irreverence was not confined to persons of one sex. 'He seldom comes into church,' wrote the 'Spectator' of Mr. William Honeycomb, 'till the prayers are about half over, and when he has entered his seat (instead of joining with the congregation) he devoutly holds his hat before his face for three or four moments, then bows to all his acquaintances, sits down, takes a pinch of snuff, and spends the remaining time in surveying the congregation.' Many of the prose and verse writers of the age inveigh with delicate but cutting satire against the flirtations, the giggling, the whispering, the bowing, and the curtseying in which the congregation in church, especially the fairer portion of it, were in the habit of indulging during the performance of divine service. The poet Young, author of the 'Night Thoughts,' when censuring the prevalent fashion of bowing to friends and acquaintances upon entering the house of prayer, observes :—

> Curtsies to curtsies, then, with grace succeed ;
> Not one the fair omits, *but* at the Creed.[2]

The poet Cowper, in one of his delightful essays contributed to the 'Connoisseur,' descants humorously on the behaviour of congregations in church in the larger cities and country towns :—

The newest fashions (he wrote) are brought down weekly by the stage coach or waggon, all the wives and daughters of the most

[1] *The Borough* : The Parish Clerk.

[2] *Satires*, vi. *On Women.*

topping tradesmen vie with each other every Sunday in the elegance of their apparel. I could even trace their gradations in their dress according to the opulence, the extent and the distance of the place from London. . . . I need not say anything of the behaviour of the congregations in these more polite places of religious resort, as the same genteel ceremonies are practised there as at the most fashionable churches in town. The ladies, immediately on their entrance, breathe a pious ejaculation through their fan-sticks, and the beaux very gravely address themselves to the haberdasher's bills glued upon the linings of their hats. This pious duty is no sooner performed than the exercise of bowing and curtseying succeeds, the locking and unlocking of the pews drowns the reader's voice at the beginning of the service, and the rustling of silks, added to the whispering and tittering of so much good company, renders him totally unintelligible to the very end of it.[1]

Choral services were certainly not at their best in the eighteenth century. Organs were far from common even in important town churches, and the monotony of the parson and the clerk's nasal duet was relieved by a rendering—it would not be far from the truth to say a murdering—of select portions of Sternhold and Hopkins's bad, or Tate and Brady's worse, rhythmical version of the Psalms of David, by a choir, a motley crew of unruly singers (who occupied a curtained loft in the western gallery) to the accompaniment of discordant fiddles, hautboys, clarionets, trombones, or violoncellos. The effect that these strange flights of melody, to say nothing of the untrained and unharmonious voices, produced on persons with delicate ears, or on 'the stranger from London,' may be best left to the reader's imagination. The plaintive wail of the oboe mingled with the deep groan of the bassoon at such times as the singers undertook the performance of the 'hanthem,' to which bucolic ears were sometimes treated, or more especially at such times as they

swelled with heart and voice the psalm,

for the edification of the clowns below who stood gaping like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken. Occasionally a band of itinerant musicians joined the choir on 'Wake Sunday,' and these, reinforced by assistance from the neighbouring villages, produced what they called 'a crash,' which never failed to fill a church to overflowing.

[1] *Conn.* No. 134.

In provincial towns the morning and evening services were, as a general rule, held twice on Sunday, and, occasionally, once during the week. But dwellers in out-of-the-way districts never heard the sound of the church-going bell for public worship, at any rate more than once a week at the very most. Dr. Stoughton, in his history of 'Religion under Anne and the First George,' cites an excerpt from an account of the archdeaconry of Canterbury during the primacy of Archbishop Herring (1747–57) preserved among the archives at Lambeth Palace, which shows that in several churches of the archdeaconry divine service was not performed more than once a month, and in others not more than once a fortnight. Of one incumbent the report says: 'He is in bad circumstances, often hides; when he is at home, he serves once a day.'[1] The duration of the one Sunday service, held in the ordinary village church, often depended upon the will of the local head of the church, to wit, the squire:—

> If the benefice be in his own gift (wrote Cowper), the vicar is his creature, and of consequence entirely at his devotion, or if the care of the church be left to a curate, the Sunday fees of roast beef and plum pudding, and a liberty to shoot in the manor, will bring him as much under the squire's command as his dogs and horses. For this reason the bell is often kept tolling, and the people waiting in the churchyard, an hour longer than the usual time; nor must the service begin till the squire has strutted up the aisle and seated himself in the great pew in the chancel. The length of the sermon is also measured by the will of the squire, as formerly by the hourglass, and I know one parish where the preacher has always the complaisance to conclude his discourse, however abruptly, the minute that the squire gives the signal by rising up after his nap.[2]

The non-observance of Sunday was very marked among the upper classes and politicians even until the close of the century. The fact of Dr. Newton, Bishop of Bristol, deeming it worthy of permanent record that in his time Mr. George Grenville regularly attended the services of the church every Sunday morning, even while he was filling the highest offices, seems to indicate that such zeal for the ordinances of religion

[1] Quoted by Dr. Stoughton, *Religion under Anne and the First George*, ii. c. xix. 80.

[2] *Conn.* No. 134.

was quite exceptional among English statesmen of that time. Sunday afforded them no interval of repose, Cabinets and consultations being held just as much on that day as on any other. Wilberforce and Franklin specially noted this. The former in writing to a correspondent named Stephen in 1785, said :—

It is very curious to hear the newspapers speaking of incessant application to business, forgetting that, by the weekly admission of rest, our faculties would be preserved from the effects of this constant strain. I am strongly impressed by the recollection of your endeavour to prevail on the lawyers to give up Sunday consultations, in which poor Romilly would not concur.

And, referring to his conference in London with Lord Chatham on June 29, 1775, Benjamin Franklin observes :—

On the Sunday following his lordship came to town and called upon me in Craven Street. He brought with him his plan transcribed in the form of an act of parliament, which he put into my hands, requesting me to consider it carefully and communicate to him such remarks upon it as should occur to me.[1]

When the Rev. John Newton entered on the incumbency of St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street, in the heart of the city of London, he was painfully impressed with the fact that although his parishioners were mostly very wealthy, few attended his ministrations,[2] and this was at a time when the city was still the abode of many of the rich commercial citizens. The truth is that the inefficiency and indifference of many of the clergy had driven best part of their congregations into the meeting-houses, while others, animated by an ignorant and misdirected zeal, had striven by every means in their power to assimilate their churches to conventicles.

The average sermon of the eighteenth century is best described in the words of one who has made a diligent study of it, as 'too stiff and formal, too cold and artificial.'[3] Numbers of the clergy did not preach sermons at all, while many of those who did, either through sheer laziness or incompetence, fell back upon manufactured sermons, compilers of which abounded then as numerously as they do now. This practice is curiously illustrated in an anecdote related by Augustus Toplady, a famous

[1] *Works*, ed. Sparks, v. 48.
[2] *Memoirs*, p. 54.
[3] Abbey, *English Church*, p. 501.

Calvinistic divine, who was rector of Broad Hembury near Honiton, from 1768 to 1778, and who is now perhaps best known as the author of the hymn, 'Rock of Ages :—'

I was buying some books in the spring of 1762 (he says), a month or two before I was ordained, from a very respectable London bookseller. After the business was over he took me to the furthest end of his long shop, and said in a low voice, 'Sir, you will soon be ordained, and I suppose you have not laid in a very great stock of sermons. I can supply you with as many sets as you please, all original, very excellent ones, and they will come for a trifle.' My answer was : 'I certainly shall never be a customer to you in that way, for I am of opinion that the man who cannot, or will not, make his own sermons is quite unfit to wear the gown. How could you think of my buying ready-made sermons? I would much sooner buy ready made clothes.' His answer shocked me. 'Nay, young gentleman, do not be surprised at my offering you ready-made sermons, for I assure you I have sold ready-made sermons to many a bishop in my time.' My reply was : 'My good sir, if you have any concern for the credit of the Church of England, never tell that news to anybody else henceforward for ever.' [1]

The poet Cowper waxes very satirical over the sermon-compiler of his own day, an individual who, as he says :—

> Grinds divinity of other days
> Down into modern use, transforms old print
> To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eye
> Of gallery critics with a thousand arts.

The sermons, even of those who enjoyed the reputation of popular preachers, were modelled on those of Archbishop Tillotson in the first half of the century, and on those of Dr. Hugh Blair in the second half of the century, and appealed infinitely more to the reason than they did to the heart. Nine out of every ten clergymen maintained a careful abstention from the discussion of any of the fundamental Christian doctrines, as it was apt to lay them open to the charge of being enthusiastic. Thus it is related that the poet Crabbe, after he had entered into holy orders, was dubbed a Methodist by certain of his reverend brethren, merely because he occasionally discoursed to his flock on the subject of future rewards and punishments. Although it was the custom for preachers to pen their discourses, and to polish and repolish them for ears

[1] Quoted by Ryle, *Christian Leaders*, p. 365.

esteemed polite, pulpit eloquence was in the main very tame. Sir William Blackstone, it is said, had the curiosity to go early in the reign of George III. from church to church, and hear every clergyman of note in London. What was the result? According to his own account, that he failed to hear one sermon in the course of his perambulation which contained more of Christian doctrine than the writings of the father of Tuscan eloquence, 'and that it would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mahomet, or of Christ.'[1] It is to be wished that this eminent lawyer had taken the trouble to record the names of the churches he visited, as well as of the preachers to whose discourses he listened, since it would have better enabled posterity to gauge the justice or injustice of his assertion. But while it is quite possible that a hearer possessed of such mental calibre as Sir W. Blackstone was, might expect rather too much, there is also some reason to believe that his charges were not quite destitute of foundation, since M. Grosley, an intelligent Frenchman, while sojourning in England in the time of George III., could find nothing to say more complimentary of the pulpit declamation that he heard than that it was

a most tedious monotony. The ministers have chosen it through respect for religion, which, as they affirm, proves, defends, and supports itself without having any occasion for the assistance of oratory. With regard to the truth of this assertion I appeal to themselves, and to the progress which religion thus inculcated makes in England.[2]

Ten years after these words were written, the Rev. Dr. Campbell, a beneficed clergyman of the Irish Church, while staying in London, happened to attend divine service at the Temple Church, when the brother of Lord Chancellor Thurlow occupied the pulpit. 'The discourse,' says Dr. Campbell, 'was the most meagre composition, and the delivery worse. He stood like Gulliver stuck in the marrow-bone, with the sermon, newspaper-like, in his hand, and, without grace or

[1] Ryle, *Christian Leaders of Last Century*, p. 15.
[2] Grosley, *Tour to London*, ii. 105.

emphasis, he in slow cadence measured it forth.'[1] Even Paley, while admitting that the sermons of the Anglican clergy were in general more replete with information, as well as more correct and chastened than those of dissenting teachers, could not but wish that they were more impressive.

If either of those two strangers in England had possessed sufficient penetration to divine the cause of this, they did not see fit to record it in their diaries. 'The Citizen of the World,' however, did detect it, and what he says is worth quoting:—'Men of real sense and understanding prefer a prudent mediocrity to a precarious popularity; and, fearing to outdo their duty, leave it half done.' In the same place he says that preachers failed to address themselves to the lower orders when in the pulpit, and consequently that those in search of instruction found the least 'in religious assemblies.' Bewigged preachers were content to drone through their hour, and to produce somnolency in all directions around them. Flattery from the pulpit was so common that an order was issued by George III., soon after his accession to the throne, forbidding all clergy who should preach before him from paying compliments to any member of the royal family; but Dr. Thomas Wilson, rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, having so far forgotten himself as to do so in a sermon which he preached in the Chapel of St. James's Palace, the king very sensibly told him of it, and assured him that he went to church to hear the praises of God and not his own. Mr. Mark Pattison's essay on the 'Tendencies of Religious Thought in England from the Revolution to the second half of the Eighteenth Century,' contributed to 'Essays and Reviews,' contains some very apposite remarks on the pulpit eloquence during that age. Reverting to the charges of dulness and insipidity which have so often been brought against it, he observes:—

> It is the substance and not the manner of the classical sermons of the eighteenth century which is meant when they are complained of as cold and barren. From this accusation they cannot be vindicated. But let it be rightly understood that it is a charge, not

[1] *Diary*, p. 23.

against the preachers, but against the religious ideas of the period.[1]

It was the opinion of the same writer that the good sense that they contained was their striking feature :—

> They are the complete reaction against the Puritan sermon of the seventeenth century. We have nothing far-fetched, fanciful, allegoric. The practice of our duty is recommended to us on the most undeniable grounds of prudence. Barrow had indulged in ambitious periods, and South had been jocular. Neither of these faults can be alleged against the model sermon of the Hanoverian period. No topic is produced which does not compel our assent as soon as it is understood, and none is there which is not understood as soon as uttered. It is one man of the world speaking to another. Collins said of St. Paul, 'that he had a great respect for him as both a man of sense and a gentleman.' He might have said the same of the best pulpit divines of his own time. They bear the closest resemblance to each other, because they all use the language of fashionable society, and say exactly the proper thing.[2]

We must never forget that that which constituted one of the chief bugbears of the English people in the eighteenth century was enthusiasm, a term which with them was held to be synonymous with what Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, in the preceding century, had defined to be 'a misconceit of inspiration,' and was, consequently, bestowed in the sense of hot-headed fanaticism, 'in opprobrium and derision to all who laid claim to a spiritual power or divine guidance such as appeared to the person by whom the reproach was used fanatical extravagance, or at the least an unauthorised overstepping of all rightful bounds of reason.'[3] Nevertheless, it was only by means of the enthusiasm of preachers that the Church was eventually dragged from the slough of despond into which, by the accident of her position, she had sunk.

If little care was displayed for churches, there was still less for churchyards. To be sure, the church folk of eighteenth-century England would have stood in no dread of the Oriental imprecation, 'May the graves of your ancestors be defiled.' Too often, God's Acre was suffered to share the fate of the fabric which it surrounded, and its deplorable condition

[1] *Essays and Reviews*, 1860, p. 277. [2] *Ibid.* p. 279.
[3] Abbey (*Enthusiasm*), *Eng. Ch.* p. 227.

perfectly justified Gray in describing the particular country churchyard which he had in mind when composing his immortal 'Elegy' as a 'neglected spot.' Sumptuous were the feasts that the green churchyard grass, the docks, and the nettles which grew in rich profusion between the tombstones afforded the incumbent's sheep, cows, horses, and poultry, and gladly did the beasts of the field avail themselves of the opportunity to browse at will on such sweet and wholesome pastures.

To praise the style of tombstone which commended itself to English people in the eighteenth century is impossible. Hideous monuments ornamented with an unlimited number of pagan deities, of lachrymose cherubim, and of puff-cheeked seraphim enveloping everything but their own persons with folds of the most elaborate drapery, appear to have been those which gave the most satisfaction for the interior of churches, and he who desires to study this repulsive and grotesque style will find many excellent specimens in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. Pope could not refrain from a sneer at the monumental taste of his time. In the third Epistle of his 'Moral Essays' he says :—

> Shouldering God's altar a vile image stands,
> Belies his features, nay, extends his hands ;
> That livelong wig which Gorgon's self might own,
> Eternal buckle takes in Parian stone.

It was the same heathenish taste which led to churchyards being laid out with huge square tombstones similar to that in old Marylebone churchyard on which Hogarth represented his 'Idle Apprentice' lolling at full length, while absorbed in the mysteries of 'chuck farthing,' and to epitaphs being engraved upon them which were fully in keeping. Giving themselves over to the base purposes of adulation, 'scarce hinting a fault or hesitating dislike,' the only object of the writers of these inscriptions seemed to be to convey to those who read them 'a high sense of the personal dignity and importance of the deceased, to commemorate the benefactions he had made, and to acquaint the world with the number of his progeny.'[1] The

[1] Pettigrew's *Chronicles of the Tombs*, p. 74.

composition of epitaphs became at that time veritably a branch of polite literature; for Pope, Gray, and even Hayley, evinced great skill in elegiac writing, and Dr. Johnson did not consider that the inditing of sonorous Latin pentameters in praise of departed merit detracted in the least from the dignity of the literary character. Now, if it had been confined to skilled versifiers, nothing could have been better; but when as too often happened the services of some local bard were employed, the results were often extremely unedifying, more especially when he happened to be of a facetious turn of mind. John Gay's epitaph in Westminster Abbey, running

> Life is a jest and all things show it;
> I thought so once but now I know it,

is a case in point; and so also is that in a churchyard at Chester which is not so well known :—

> Beneath this stone lies Catherine Gray,
> Changed to a lifeless lump of clay;
> By earth and clay she got her pelf,
> And now she's turned to earth herself.
> Ye weeping friends, let me advise,
> Abate your tears and dry your eyes;
> For what avails a flood of tears?
> Who knows but in a course of years,
> In some tall pitcher or brown pan,
> She in her shop may be again.[1]

The following, inscribed on a tablet erected by Horace Walpole, may yet be seen against the outer wall of the church of St. Anne, Soho :—

> NEAR THIS PLACE IS INTERRED
> THEODORE, KING OF CORSICA,
> WHO DIED IN THIS PARISH, DECEMBER 11, 1756,
> IMMEDIATELY AFTER LEAVING
> THE KING'S BENCH PRISON,
> BY THE BENEFIT OF THE ACT OF INSOLVENCY;
> IN CONSEQUENCE OF WHICH
> HE REGISTERED THE KINGDOM OF CORSICA
> FOR THE USE OF HIS CREDITORS.
>
> The grave—great teacher—to a level brings
> Heroes and beggars, galley slaves and kings,

[1] Pettigrew's *Chronicles of the Tombs*, p. 477.

But Theodore this moral learned ere dead,
Fate poured its lessons on his living head,
Bestowed a kingdom and denied him bread.[1]

So, too, the following on the tombstone in Hadleigh churchyard, Suffolk, of John Turner, a blacksmith, who died in 1735 :—

My sledge and hammer lie declin'd,
My bellows have quite lost their wind,
My fire's extinct, my forge decay'd,
My vice is in the dust all laid.
My coal is spent, my iron gone,
My nails are drove, my work is done ;
My fire-dried corpse lies here at rest,
My soul, smoke-like, is soaring to be blest.

The walls of churches in the eighteenth century were made strange counsellors, so that it might literally be said there were 'sermons in stones.' In the early part of the eighteenth century one Simon Blomfield, in beautifying the parish church of Monk's Eleigh in Suffolk, inscribed on the south wall these words : *Ne obliviscamini pauperum, G. A.*—as a hint to one Giles Andrews, a very rich bachelor parishioner who occupied a seat not far off, not to forget to bequeath his great possessions to the poor.[2] The gross laxity which prevailed among cathedral authorities during the period is the best excuse which can be urged in defence of those at Winchester, when in 1764 they allowed the following abominable piece of buffoonery, dignified with the title of 'epitaph,' to be engraved on a memorial stone in the churchyard attached to the cathedral :—

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS THETCHER, A GRENADIER IN THE NORTH BATTALION OF THE HAMPSHIRE MILITIA, WHO DIED OF A FEVER CONTRACTED BY DRINKING SMALL BEER, WHEN HOT, THE 12TH OF MAY, 1764.

Here rests in peace a Hampshire grenadier,
Who killed himself by drinking poor small beer.
Soldiers, be warned by his untimely fall,
And when you're hot drink strong, or none at all.[3]

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[1] Pettigrew's *Chronicles of the Tombs*, p. 320.
[2] Quoted by Pigot, *Hist. Hadleigh*, p. 62.
[3] Thomas Webb's *Collection of Epitaphs*, 1775, ii. 28.

Similar ludicrous absurdities are equally visible in the inscriptions which some of the church bells that were cast during that period exhibit. Thus the first of a peal of six hanging in the belfry of the parish church, Bentley, in Hampshire, bears the following legend :—

> John Meyer gave twenty pound
> To meck [*sic*] mee a lusty sound.

And the fifth is inscribed with this :—

> Unto the church I do you call,
> Death to the grave will summons all.

An inscription on one of the bells in the belfry of the parish church of Towcester in Northamptonshire, cast in 1723, informs the reader that—

> When four this steeple long did hold
> They were the emblems of a scold
> No music,
> But we shall see
> What pleasant music six will be.

Another bell bears this inscription :—

> Pull on, brave boys, I'm metal to the back,
> But will be hanged before I crack.[1]

And now as regards the Nonconformist bodies. Did the miserable stagnation and spiritual mortality which reigned in the National Church extend itself to them or did it not? The answer to this question must be in the affirmative. The pious Dr. Edmund Calamy, one of the most estimable apologists for English Protestant Nonconformity, writing in 1730 in reference to the decay of the dissenting interest, says, 'Whatsoever decrease may have appeared in some places, there were sensible advances in others. But at the same time a real decay of serious religion, both in the Church and out of it, was very visible.'[2] It was asserted by another, Dr. Isaac Watts, whose name is 'associated with certain hymns still dear to infancy,' that there was a general decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, and that it was a common matter of mournful observation among all who laid the cause of God to heart.

[1] North's *Church Bells of Northants.*
[2] *Life of Calamy*, ed. by J. T. Rutt, ii. 530–1.

Dr. Guyse gave it as his opinion that 'the religion of nature made up the darling topic of the age, and that the Christian religion was valued only for the sake of that, and only so far as it carried on the light of nature and was a bare improvement of that light.' Even Skeats, the historian of the Dissenting Churches, and one by no means unfavourably disposed to view their history through rose-coloured spectacles, says in reference to the lull which succeeded to the Bangorian controversy, that

> Religion, whether in the established church or out of it, never made less progress than it did after the cessation of the Bangorian and Salters' Hall disputes. If, as was undoubtedly the case, breadth of thought and charity of sentiment increased, and were to some extent settled into a mental habit of the nation, religious activity did not increase. The churches were characterised by a cold indifferentism. The zeal of Puritanism was almost as unknown as it was unimitated.[1]

'Those,' wrote Mosheim, the great ecclesiastical historian, in 1740, 'who are best acquainted with the state of the English nation, tell us that the Dissenting interest declines from day to day.'[2] Dr. Stoughton, in his singularly candid and impartial survey of 'Religion under Anne and the First Georges,' is constrained to admit 'that with certain exceptions . . . a spirit of indifference respecting the masses of the people infected the respectable congregations gathered within the walls of Protestant meeting-houses.'

There is little to be said about Nonconformist places of worship as they existed in the eighteenth century, because their condition both externally and internally was much the same then as it is now. Describing the interior of one historic meeting-house at Norwich, Dr. Stoughton says :—

> On entering your attention was attracted by the pulpit, either a good large platform, enclosed by wainscot sides, with a curved projection in front supporting a bookboard, or a deep narrow box . . . surmounted by a heavy sounding-board. . . . On the backboard above the preacher there was sometimes a nail or peg. . . . Occasionally a desk for the precentor or clerk stood under the pulpit, and in front was almost always placed a table pew, as it was called—a large square or oblong enclosure, containing a seat run-

[1] Skeats's *History of the Free Churches of England*, p. 313.
[2] Mosheim's *Eccl. Hist.* trans. Maclaine, pp. 5, 95.

ning all round, with the Communion Table in the middle. . . . The poor generally occupied the surrounding benches; and at the administration of the Lord's Supper they removed to give place to the deacons, and to the pastor who presided. A basin, in some instances carried up to the side of the pulpit, where a ring had been fixed to receive it, served for the purpose of holy baptism. The principal pews were spacious, like parlours; and those appropriated to rich men . . . were lined with green baize, and were often concealed behind thick curtains. . . . Two or three large brass chandeliers were in numerous cases suspended from the ceiling by a chain, and with their few candles they gave in the late hours of a winter's afternoon just light enough to make darkness visible. Evening services at that period were unusual, save on some very special occasion. In the front gallery, or in the table pew, to the exclusion of the poor, there would be singing men and singing women to lead the psalmody; and by no means in all cases did they stand when engaged in the service of song.[1]

It has been remarked that the tremendous revolutionary volcano which burst forth in France in the closing decade of the eighteenth century, the shock of which roused all Europe from its protracted slumber, indirectly exercised a most powerful influence upon the religious world of England; and that it was practically the means of rekindling the lamp of religious zeal and activity, and of infusing new vitality into the very dry bones of Anglican churchmanship. As to the truth of this remark there can hardly be two opinions. The times, so infectious in themselves, found many Englishmen open to their influence. Encouraged by the success of infidelity abroad, the enemies of religion boldly proclaimed themselves in England in no inconsiderable numbers, manifesting their readiness to join in the demolition of those sacred bulwarks which for ages had secured it against the attacks of former assailants. Foremost in the ranks appeared the authors of the 'Age of Reason,' and of the 'Inquiry concerning Political Justice.' Then it was that the leaders of the Evangelical school, which was at that time almost exclusively the representative of vital religion, becoming alarmed at 'the throes of empires and the fall of dynasties,' began to inculcate in their pulpit exhortations greater earnestness and integrity among professing Christians, and with such

[1] Stoughton's *Religion under Anne and the Georges*, i. 201–3.

success that they roused the careless and apathetic from John o' Groat's to Land's End.

The sermons of the master minds of this school, to whom the Church owes a deep debt of gratitude, almost equalled in number those of Wesley and Whitefield, and were often protracted to great length. Some of the most famous of this school were Mr. Cecil in London, Mr. Conyers at Helmsley, Mr. Venn at Huddersfield, Mr. Milner at Hull, Mr. Simeon at Cambridge ; but there were others of considerable mark scattered throughout England. Opposing the relaxation of subscription from their love of the Articles, and all tampering with the Prayer Book from their fear of Arian and Unitarian tendencies among the great men, they helped to preserve uninjured those formularies which in fact condemned many of their doctrines, but which they loved for the devout spirit which breathed in them. By their sermons they exterminated in great measure the dregs of Socinianism, and the vapid moral platitudes which had been too much in vogue for sermons, and setting forth to their hearers the grand truths of the Gospel, they excited a fervour in them which rivalled, if it did not surpass, the earnestness of the Wesleyans.[1]

Among the literary productions of this school of thought, Hannah More's tractate entitled 'Thoughts on the Influence of the Manners of the Great on General Society,' published in 1787, six editions of which were exhausted in as many weeks, and William Wilberforce's celebrated treatise on 'Practical Christianity,' deserve specially to be mentioned. Although it can be hardly admitted, as has been asserted, that the latter work 'beyond all question gave the first general impulse to that warmer and more earnest spirit of piety' which began to leaven society after it made its appearance, it cannot be doubted that it was one which exercised a very widespread and at the same time a very beneficial influence upon the reading public of the particular period at which it was published.

The prominence which the adherents of the Evangelical school gave to such doctrines as the universal necessity of conversion, of justification by faith, and of the sole authority

[1] Perry's *Hist. Church of England*, p. 593. It is undeniable that had it not been for the assistance which was rendered by the representatives of the Evangelical school, both rich men, and their coadjutors, in their outdoor agitations, and Romilly, Wilberforce, and others in the legislative assembly, might have exerted themselves altogether in vain.

of Scripture as the rule of faith, did not prevent them from being singularly active in well doing, seeing that both in public and private, both at home and abroad, they did what in them lay for the repression of evil, for the cause of philanthropy, and for the general regeneration of English society. All these good works which have laid those who have entered into their labours under obligations which they have not always been prompt to acknowledge, will atone for many errors and serious violations of ecclesiastical order, and will ever keep their memory green.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE FLEET CHAPLAINS AND THE FLEET WEDDINGS.

History of the Fleet registers—Origin of the Fleet marriages—The shameful practices of parsons and plyers—Description of the ceremony attendant upon a Fleet wedding—Extracts from the registers—Other localities besides the Fleet Prison used for purposes of clandestine matrimony—Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act—Passing of the Act—Evasion of its provisions—Opposition—Sir William Blackstone's comments on the measure—Attempts at its repeal—Its defect—Fledborough and Gretna Green—Concluding observations on the eighteenth century.

A PASSING reference was made in the foregoing chapter to the Fleet chaplains and the Fleet marriages. So very extraordinary were these unhallowed rites, and so great a number of side lights are they instrumental in casting not only upon English society but also upon the condition of the Anglican clergy during the first half of the eighteenth century, that they may fairly claim a detailed notice, which, with the indulgence of the reader, it will be the purpose of the present chapter to afford.

A period of considerably more than half a century has now elapsed since John Southerden Burn gave to the reading world a small volume, that has since become extremely rare, embodying the results of his researches among the records of these marriages, which had first attracted his attention when engaged in collecting materials for his highly curious work, entitled 'Registrum Ecclesiæ Parochialis.' At the time this little book made its appearance, namely in 1833, the Fleet Registers, of the bare existence of which none save a few professed scholars and antiquaries were even so much as aware, occupied a nook of the diocesan registry of London, whither they had been consigned at the instance of Lord Sidmouth after being pur-

chased by the Government from a number of private individuals, including a man named Cox, in 1821. Between this date and that of Her Majesty's accession to the throne, the defective state of the existing laws in regard to parochial registration engrossed the serious attention of the Legislature, with the result that in the year 1837 a Royal Commission was appointed for the express purpose of instituting an enquiry into the state, the custody, and the authenticity of non-parochial registers, both in England and the Principality.

The results which this Commission attained were in the highest degree satisfactory, and a very great number of the registers submitted to the inspection of the members of which it was composed were by them recommended, after careful consideration, to constitute evidence in courts of law, and were subsequently transferred to the custodianship of the Registrar-General. It was at this time that, in common with many ancient and curious documents which had long lain hid, the registers of the famous—it would, perhaps, be nearer the mark to say infamous—Fleet weddings, which had for some years enjoyed the dust and silence of the Bishop of London's registry, saw once more the light of day. No fewer than twelve hundred of these registers were submitted to the consideration of the Commissioners—more than nine hundred of them being no registers at all in the modern acceptation of the term, but merely small pocket memorandum and account books, containing entries in all styles of calligraphy, ranging from a style not more indecipherable than that of Edmund Burke to a style which Professor Porson would not have disdained to own. In the report which the Registration Commissioners issued in 1838, they stated that, for divers reasons which will be more fully understood by the reader further on, they were unable to recommend that the Fleet Registers should be placed on the same footing as the others to which no exception had been taken, although they were of opinion that they should be committed to the same custodianship. This suggestion met with the entire approval of those to whom it was addressed, and the consequence was that the Fleet Registers were soon afterwards removed to Somerset House, where they have ever since re-

mained. Before proceeding to an examination of the pocket books and the registers, there is just one question which it will be necessary to discuss, with the aid of Mr. Burn's volume, and at the risk of slight irrelevancy, namely :—How and when did the Fleet marriages originate?

The first point to be noticed in answering this question is that in England, until 1754, the year which marked the passing of Lord Hardwicke's famous Marriage Act, neither the presence of a clerk in full orders, nor the performance of any religious ceremony, was regarded as an indispensable qualification for the validity of a marriage. It was enough if two parties, desirous of becoming man and wife, contracted so to do, *per verba de praesenti*, or as it was termed, *per verba de futuro* ; either of these modes, when duly followed by a consummation, constituted in the eyes of English lawyers real matrimony. That the Church could anathematise such marriages, and that she could mete out censure and even punishment to those who departed from her practice, that she might, moreover, insist upon its solemnisation *in facie ecclesiæ*, is, of course, true enough, but that no power could render such marriages null and void is equally true.

But, although marriages celebrated in this manner were acknowledged by law, they were nevertheless irregular by reason of their deficiency in ceremony. The one thing needful for the perfecting of them, to their redemption from incompleteness, was their celebration in the presence of a clerk in priests' orders, even though his intervention might of itself be irregular.

Owing to various reasons, upon which it is needless here that we should dwell, irregular marriages by the time of the accession of William III. had come annually to be celebrated by thousands in certain churches and chapels scattered throughout the metropolis which enjoyed exemption from episcopal jurisdiction ; and the clergy attached to these churches seized this exemption as an excellent pretext, 'on purpose to defend their marrying without banns or license.' Nothing occurred to disturb the even tenor of their way until the year 1686, when the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, becom-

ing sensible of the scandalous pitch to which matters had come, determined resolutely to do what in them lay towards checking it, by making examples of the chief offenders. According to Newcourt, the learned author of the 'Repertorium,' they began on February 17 in that year by suspending *ab officio et beneficio*, during the space of three years, the Rev. Adam Elliott, rector of St. James's, Duke's Place, for having married or suffered to be married divers persons at his church, without either banns or licence. On May 28, however, in the following year, the Commissioners relaxed Elliot's suspension, in answer to his humble petition, and granted him permission to resume his ministerial duties. The probability is that he found these of an exceedingly light nature, seeing that no long interval elapsed before he resumed his old practices, and married on an average sixteen couples daily.

At this point it may be as well to mention that towards the latter end of the seventeenth century the debtors' prison in the Fleet afforded a harbour of refuge to a considerable number of dissolute divines—the very scum and dregs of the Anglican clergy—and that as the eighteenth century progressed their numbers increased rather than decreased. Many of these clerical debtors were not allowed to wander from the precincts of their prison ; to others this privilege was not denied so long as they elected to keep within what were known as the rules or bounds of the Fleet, which topographically extended about a mile each way. Boundless was the exultation of these gentlemen when they learned the nature of the proceedings which had been instituted by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners against their beneficed brethren. The law might suspend from their functions those clergy who performed marriages clandestinely ; it was quite another thing to stop people from contracting clandestine marriages. So said, or rather mused, the clerical prisoners in the Fleet, who, knowing full well that the custom of publishing the banns of marriage had, as Walpole said, 'now fallen totally into desuetude except among the common people,' thereupon determined to supply the breach. Silently they commenced by marrying, without notice and without the publicity of banns, all people who applied to them in the chapel

of the Fleet Prison, charging a fee which varied from six to fifteen shillings. Encouraged by the success they achieved, they grew bolder and bolder, as the applications became more and more frequent. All sorts and conditions of society came to be married at the prison, from people of quality down to domestic servants and mariners. It is recorded that between the months of October 1704 and February 1705 the marriages solemnised in the chapel of the Fleet Prison had reached the respectable number of 2,950! Meanwhile the shameless practices of the parsons had not escaped the notice of the secular authority; the scandal was discussed in Parliament, and in the tenth year of the reign of Queen Anne an Act was passed decreeing the ineligibility of the Fleet Prison chapel for the celebration of clandestine marriages.

But the reverend gentlemen were not to be thus outdone, more especially as the celebrity of the Fleet Prison even now had spread from Dan to Beersheba, for the ease and expedition with which marriages were solemnised, and it was of the utmost importance that this should be maintained at all hazards. Around the prison existed numerous alehouses, taverns, and gin and brandy shops, largely frequented by the 'Rulers.' Some of the parsons who tenanted a room in these establishments began to prevail upon the landlord to fit one up for the celebration of matrimony. This, in the view of immediate gain, they were not slow in doing; and by degrees from the sign-boards and on the windows of these establishments, placards of a nature much resembling the following began to be exhibited :—

> G.R.
> At the true Chapel
> at the Old Red Hand and Mitre, three doors from Fleet Lane, and next door to the White Swan.
> Marriages are performed by authority by the Reverend Mr. SYMSON, educated at the University of Cambridge, and late Chaplain to the Earl of Rothes.
> N.B.—Without Imposition.

Not content with placards, the parsons sometimes inserted

in the newspapers a puffing advertisement of the stamp subjoined :—

> Marriages with a licence, certificate, and a crown stamp, at a guinea, at the new chapel, next door to the china shop, near Fleet Bridge, London, by a regular bred clergyman and not by a Fleet parson, as is insinuated in the public papers ; and that the town may be freed mistakes, no clergyman being a prisoner in the rules of the Fleet dare marry ; and to obviate all doubts, this chapel is not in the verge of the Fleet, but kept by a gentleman [named James Lando] who was lately chaplain on board one of his Majesty's men-of-war, and likewise has gloriously distinguished himself in defence of his King and country, and is above committing those little mean actions that some men impose on people, being determined to have everything conducted with the utmost decency and regularity, such as shall be always supported in law and equity.

The traffic in matrimony was now carried on in a manner which was a perfect disgrace to a nation making any pretensions to civilisation. Episcopal jurisdiction was openly invaded by the parsons. Civil authority was defied by the tavern-keepers. The number of marriage-houses increased and multiplied. The parsons who officiated in them received the fees, and gave a few pence by way of commission to the men or women whom they employed as touters, much in the same way as cheap photographers do now. The tavern-keepers went halves with the parson's fees, and, in utter defiance of the law, sold the spirituous liquors which were customarily drunk by the bride and bridegroom, and their friends. Sometimes the keeper of a brandy-shop retained the services of a clerical debtor on his establishment at a stipulated weekly salary ; in other cases, he sent for the nearest parson, directly a marriage party appeared upon the scene, and shared the fee with him when the ceremony had been performed.

It will be readily understood that, in consequence of their being engaged on a system of payment by results, the touters, or 'plyers' as they were called, left no stone unturned to secure their prey. When this failed, as it did sometimes, they never hesitated to resort to bullying and intimidation, nay, even to dragging in couples by force who happened to pass, either going to or returning from St. Paul's Cathedral, or while engaged in shopping on Ludgate Hill.

A long letter addressed to the editor of the 'Grub Street Journal,' January 15, 1734–5, quoted by Burn in his 'History of the Fleet Marriages,' if genuine, says much for the rascality of the plyers. The correspondent who signed herself 'Virtuous' wrote thus :—

Since midsummer last a young lady of birth and fortune was deluded and forced from her friends, and by the assistance of a wry-necked, swearing parson, married to an atheistical wretch whose life is a continued practice of all manner of vice and debauchery. And since the ruin of my relation another lady of my acquaintance had like to have been trepanned in the following manner. This lady had appointed to meet a gentlewoman at the Old Playhouse in Drury Lane, but extraordinary business prevented her coming. Being alone when the play was done she bade a boy call a coach for the city. One dressed like a gentleman helps her into it, and jumps in after her. 'Madam,' says he, 'this coach was called for me, and since the weather is so bad, and there is no other, I beg leave to bear you company. I am going into the city and will set you down wherever you please.' The lady begged to be excused; but he bade the coachman drive on. Being come to Ludgate Hill, he told her his sister who waited his coming, but five doors up the court, would go with her in two minutes. He went and returned with his pretended sister, who asked her to step in one minute and she would wait upon her in the coach. Deluded with the assurance of having his sister's company the poor lady foolishly followed her into the house, when instantly the sister vanished; and a tawny fellow in a black coat and a black wig appeared. 'Madam, you are come in good time, the Doctor was just a-going!' 'The Doctor?' says she, horribly frightened; fearing it was a mad-house, 'What has the Doctor to do with me?' To marry you to that gentleman; the Doctor has waited for you these three hours, and will be paid by you or that gentleman before you go!' 'That gentleman!' says she, recovering herself, 'is worthy a better fortune than mine,' and begged hard to be gone. But Doctor Wryneck swore she should be married; or if she would not he would still have his fee and register their marriage from that night. The lady, finding she could not escape without money or a pledge, told them she liked the gentleman so well she would certainly meet him to-morrow night, and gave them a ring as a pledge, which, says she, 'was my mother's gift on her death-bed, injoining that if ever I married it should be my wedding-ring.' By which cunning contrivance she was delivered from the black Doctor and his tawny crew.[1]

Thomas Pennant, the well-known antiquary, writing in 1791, referred to the Fleet Prison, and says that in walking along

[1] Quoted by Burn, *Hist. of Fleet Marriages*, pp. 14–15.

the street in his youth on the side next to the prison, he had often been tempted by the question, 'Sir, will you be pleased to walk in and be married?' 'Along this most lawless space,' he says, 'was hung up the frequent sign of a male and female hand conjoined, with "Marriages performed within" written beneath. A dirty fellow invited you in. The parson was seen walking before his shop; a squalid profligate figure, clad in a tattered plaid night-gown, with a fiery face, and ready to couple you for a dram of gin or a roll of tobacco.'[1]

To picture a Fleet marriage scene requires no great mental effort. A man and a woman desirous of being united in the bonds of wedlock, found themselves in the vicinity of the Fleet Prison, where in the twinkling of an eye they were surrounded and loudly importuned by the plyers, like so many harpies, each sounding the praises of his respective employer. Selecting, let us say, the Rev. Walter Wyatt—they would be conducted into a room furnished with chairs, cushions, and proper accessories, where that estimable gentleman, arrayed in orthodox though somewhat frowsy canonicals, would receive them with an unctuous smile. If any doubts crossed his mind as to the ability of the couple to pay his fee, he would, of course, never fail to make himself perfectly satisfied on that head before he proceeded to read one word of the marriage service. But if, on the other hand, the personal appearance of the pair sufficiently betokened that they could well afford to disburse the fee, the reverend gentleman lost no time in performing his functions. A potboy or the keeper of the tavern, who might be either a man or a woman, usually took up his position by the side of the parson and mumbled forth the responses, as he read the rite of matrimony (considerably abridged) from a large Book of Common Prayer which lay open before him on a table. When the ceremony was ended, the officiant took out his pocket-book and made a record of the marriage (unless the parties were desirous of keeping their marriage quite secret), which record was or was not copied when he had leisure into a thick register; and filled up a blank certificate of the mar-

[1] Pennant's *Hist. Lond.* 1791, p. 224.

riage to the two parties, who paid a fee varying according to their station in life. It is almost needless to add that the certificate was made to appear as important as possible by being printed on a strip of vellum, and adorned with the imperial coat of arms; and that the crowning of this solemn mockery was a consumption of such liquors as the establishment afforded, which usually led to rioting and disturbances of a very serious nature.

Having said so much by way of preface, let us now peruse some of the extraordinary records in which both the pocket-books and the registers abound. One or two of the Fleet parsons were occasionally not afraid of writing about themselves, and of expressing their opinions on men and things; and as what little they have written is curious and affords us some insight into the character of a body of men who have long since been sent to their account with all their imperfections on their heads, a few specimens of them shall first be given. Here are two from a pocket-book which, judging from internal evidence, belonged to the Rev. John Floud, a minister at the Fleet from 1709 to 1729:—'God is just, you are a villain,'—'Solomon says the Bread of Deceit is sweet to a wicked man. Read part of ye 41 Psal., a part of ye 55 (from 10 to 16, both inclusive) and lay your hand upon y^r^ Hart and say that a Comon highwayman is a more honest man to you.' Beneath an entry in a small pocket-book, bearing date of 1738, appears the following:—'Beauty and Youth Cannot Defend us from Death. Common sense.' Accompanying the entry of a marriage in another book, undated, is written this significant remark—'A Wicked Wife is a Damnable Thing.' Next are citations from a pocket-book which belonged to the Rev. Walter Wyatt, minister at the Fleet from 1713 to 1750, and who seems to have been one of the most successful and flourishing of the fraternity, but evidently one not altogether dead to the still small voice of his own conscience:—

August 5, 1736. Give to every man his Due and Learn ye way of truth.

This advice cannot be taken by those that are Concerned in ye ffleet Marriages, not so much as ye Priest can do ye thing yt is just

and right there unless he designs to starve. For by Lying, Bullying, and Swearing to extort money from ye silly and unwary people you advance your business and gets your pelf which always wastes like snow on a Sun Shiney Day.

At the back of the book, Parson Wyatt quotes, with approval, the Psalmist's precept to the effect that 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.'

In another pocket-book the same gentleman has written :—'Walter Wyatt of St. Sepulchre's Cler. Sunday, July the Fourth, 1736. Let everything that hath Breath praise the Lord. Jubilate. Always the Best.' At the end of this pocket-book occur the appended memoranda :—'Jno. Todd of St. John's, Wapping, waterman a friendly adviser and Director to ye ffleet for Marriages. Goodness with greatness makes a complet—1734.'—'Gandor Warne of Woolwich, a man of note and Brings Weding to ye fleet, sailors, etc.' Another of the pocket-books contains a long paper in John Floud's handwriting, 'for the Holy Catholick Church,' in addition to several copies of epitaphs. On the cover of a pocket-book, dated 1730, is written a copy of elegiac verses, and another, dated 1747, is full of verses, containing among other things a mock-humorous poem, entitled 'The Fleet Parson, a Tale,' printed by Burn in his 'History of the Fleet Marriages,' which is rather too long for quotation here. Another register, undated, contains the following remark in the handwriting of the Rev. Walter Wyatt :—'If a Clark or plyer tells a Lye you must vouch it to be as true as ye Gospel, and if disputed you must affirm with an Oath to ye truth of a downright Damnable Falsehood. Virtus Laudatur et Alget.'

We shall now pass from what may be termed these autobiographic memoranda to glance at some of the records of the marriages, and, in so doing, it is necessary to observe that it is impossible, in all instances, to gather who the writer is, as it is sometimes a parson, sometimes a clerk or a plyer, sometimes even the keeper of a brandy shop. Here is a note dated March 23, 1737-8 :—'Came a parcell of people Ten in number and a Coupell was married Supposed to come out of Spitellfields but would not pay for Registering Had the Assu-

rance to Stay from About Seven to Eleven at night making a noise till the watch came.' That the services of the Fleet parsons could be commanded at all times during the twenty-four hours is evident from the subjoined entry :—

Jan. 21, 1738. Very abusive . . . at night. William Clements and Sarah Ryder. He swore 5 oaths and would not stay to be register'd, nor pay.

July 10, 1738. John Smith of St. John's, Wapping, Weaver, and Elizabeth Taylor of St. Mary, White Chapell. Cursed and swore vehemently, pd. 3*s.* 6*d.*, to pay 5*s.* 6*d.* moar, 5*s.* o*d.*, 2*s.* o*d.* coppy. Self out of a coach that went away.—Oct. 11, 1738. John Diblin of Stoke Darent in Surry, Husb. B., and Mary Guilford. Ditto w. Dare g. all half married by Barrott on ye 30th of Sept. pd. 4*s.*, came this day pd. 6*d.* more, married by Dare.—Oct. 22, 1738. Thomas Lawson and G. M. Fenn were not married, pd. 2*s.* 6*d.*, were to come and pay 3*s.* 6*d.* more for it and regist. have not.—May 8, 1739. Daniel Prowton of Benninton in Hartfordshire, Husbandman, and Sarah Figgin of Munden sp., brought a sawse fellow with them. Rose a great mob. Gave a writen coppy.

A little farther on appears another to the following effect :—

Came Sargent James Somervill, a Pensioner of Chealse and married but the wooman would not tell her name nor be Registered, she was a very wicked wooman and the wooman that was with her the same.

June, 1739. Came a man and a Wooman from St. Giles, as he said. Left 2*s.* with Mr. Ashwell, went to fetch more money to pay 7*s.* 6*d.* and be married and have all things done, but came no more. —July, 1739. Gave this marriage by Jos., silly folly.

Of a couple married in July 1739, the writer says, 'the man w^t^ brought them took the copy would not let them pay for it.' In the previous month of the same year, 'the woman very Cross and would not pay to be Registered.' In the same year, month not mentioned, 'By Josh and Mr. Barrott's folly or had full fees.' Sept. 1739, a couple 'would have come but was mobbed.' Several of the foregoing entries state that the parties declined to favour the parson with their surnames. Here is another instance of such refusal—'March ye 4th, 1740. William and Sarah, he Dressed in a Gold Waistcoat like an officer, she a Beautifull young Lady with 2 fine Diamond Rings and a Black high Crown hat, and very well Dressed at Boyer's. October 4, 1740 :—Would not tell their names, swor when

they came to pay.' It may very naturally occur to the reader to enquire whether in all cases these priests of Hymen were really in holy orders or not. Unfortunately there is only too much reason to believe, that at least a fourth of them were sham clerks, and this seems to have been the view of the case which the press of that day also took, seeing that in the 'General Advertiser' for December 12, 1747, a writer cautions the unwary that 'some of the persons that pretend to marry in the Fleet and the places adjacent have been charged in the course of the law as not being in holy orders, by which several unwary people have been great sufferers in the proof of their pretended marriages.'

Further proof of this lack of episcopal ordination is contained in the following paragraph, transcribed from the issue of the 'General Advertiser' for December 22, 1746 :—

> On Friday last (19th) was brought before Sir Joseph Hankey, at Guildhall, a man in Clergyman's habit, for begging which he made a common practice of. He was committed for further examination the next day when it appeared he was a notorious idle fellow, and common cheat, having made use of that habit only to impose on the public, as also to perform the office of marrying several persons at the Fleet prison; whereupon he was committed to Bridewell to hard labour.

It was these practices which led to frauds similar to that to which Olivia Primrose, the daughter of the Vicar of Wakefield, fell a victim. Olivia, found by her father in the inn, tells him that she knew the ceremony of her marriage with Mr. Thornhill, which was privately performed by a Popish priest, was in no way binding, and that she had nothing but his honour to which to trust.

> 'What,' interrupted her father, 'and were you indeed married by a priest, and in orders?' 'Indeed, sir, we were,' replied she, 'though we were both sworn to conceal his name;' then referring to her supposed husband, she says, 'he has been married already by the same priest to six or eight wives more whom, like me, he has deceived and abandoned.'[1]

The evil had been enough if it had stopped at this point. But it did not, for by it, as Sir George Trevelyan has observed,

[1] *Vicar of Wakefield*, c. xxi.

the succession to property was rendered doubtful and insecure, every day in term time produced hearings in Chancery, or appeals in the Lords, concerning the validity of a marriage which had been solemnized thirty years before in the back parlour of a public-house, or in some still more degraded haunt of vice; and the children might be ruined by an act of momentary folly committed when the father was a midshipman on leave from Sheerness, or a Westminster boy out for a half holiday.

But to proceed with the records of the marriages.

April the 26th, 1741. N.B. 2 young men yt by Appearance look'd like Gentlemen, One Especially, and One Young Woman Dress'd in Velvet Hood and Scarf, and one of the young Men were married first called himself Master Salesman, afterwards said he was a person of Distinction, his name was John and the Woman Mary, but their Behaviour appear'd scoundrily at the Cock. Mr. Crampton present gave at last 10*s.* 6*d.* Oct. 27, 1741. Vile people continued mobbing for 3 hours till 1 clock in the morning, till the Constable came to disperse. August 10, 1741, about Eleven a clock in ye morn'g some People Brought by fordham to be married pd 5*s.*, nothing clrk, and had a fellow with them was very abusive. Would not tell thare names to be Register'd, nor from whence they Came, but I believe out of Essex.

A dreadful catastrophe is recorded in a pocket-book under date of June 1742 :—

Alexander Bunts, of St. Paul's, Deptford, marriner, B., and Martha Norwood, Ditto, Sp., Witness, Ann Jones, David Playn. Was very wicked and abusive and Raised a mobb at ye Corner of Eastland's, beate my daughter Kitty, swore violently that if the Parson or I evver dare to come out that would have our hart's Blood, and a woman whoe was with them whoes name I could not Learn swore many times yt she would come and bring her Giant whoe should brake every bone in our skins, or if we dare come to Deptford wee should not Be Sufferd to (go) alive away. Bunt's wife it was whogh Beat the Child. Bunts and Playn threatened us so violent. They locked the Doore and would not Lett Mr. Ashwell nor me out a great while. Struck Mr. Ashwell, and Bunts struck me.

Of a bridegroom in the same year the record is, 'He swore and was very sawsey.'

Here is an entry proving that the higher classes of society, in common with the lower orders, occasionally sought the aid of the Fleet parsons :—

Aug. 10, 1742, Don Dommicus Bonaventurea, Baron Spittery, Abbot of St. Mary in Prato, Notary and Apostolick Notary,

Chaplain of House to the King of the two Sicilia, and Knight of the Order of St. Salvator, in St. James's West (Batchelor), and Martha Alexander, of the same (Spinster) of Do. Spinster, at his house, 9*s.* 6*d.*

And here is a newspaper paragraph showing to what dodges plyers would sometimes resort :—

On Tuesday, one Oates, a plyer for and clerk to Weddings at the Bull and Garter, by the Fleet Gate, was bound over to appear at the next Sessions, for hiring one John Funnell, a poor boy (for half a guinea) that sells fruit on Fleet Bridge, to personate one John Todd, and to marry a woman in his name, which he accordingly did ; and the better to accomplish this piece of villany the said Oates provided a blind parson for that purpose.[1]

June 7, 1743 :—

Perkins of Shoreditch and Harling Ash ; pd 4*s.* o*d.* clrk ; no copy. Was a very abusive woman with them whoe called me and the Min'r all the Rouges (*sic*) and villans as was possible to come out of her mouth because would not give them a parch : Cert. for 1*s.* ; to pay 3*s.* 8*d.* for copy or 10*s.* for stamp.

An entry referring to a couple married in July 1743 concludes with this note : 'Very poor as pretended, but was not so.'

Nov. 1743, were very abusive but beg pardon and was civile. Jany. 1743, ignorant Wretches who would not Pay, but thought 3 shillings was enough, and she said she did not care he was an honest man.

More than one of the foregoing entries contains a reference to people going away 'half married,' as it was termed. Here is another instance :—'N.B. A coachman came and was half married and wou'd give but 3*s.* 6*d.* and went off.' 'Had a noise for foure hours about the money.' 'N.B. Stole a silver spoon.' '1740, Geo. Grant and Ann Gordon, B. and Sp. Stole my cloathes brush.' 'Snuff-box left for 4*s.* 6*d.*' It appears that for the insertion of records of marriages which the contracting parties were desirous of keeping secret, more especially when they were of superior rank, a private book was kept. 'I have put a secret Wedding in my private Book of Memorandums on this day.' So runs a record dated Nov. 5, 1742. 'After marriage I almost co'd prove ym both women ; the one was dress'd as a man, thin pale face and wrinkled chin.'

[1] *Grub Street Journal*, Sept. 1732.

A Fleet parson was expected to be readily accessible at any time of the night or day :—

Christm[r] Day, at night Late, about the Hour of 12, came to Mr. Alders, John Newbury, Gent., and Maria Diens and a 3rd Person. Gave —; behav'd Rudely, told me that my Gown ought to be stript of my back.

Again,—

Thomas Delves, Nobleman's Ser[t], White Hart Court of West., and Betty Rushworth, Do., B. and Sp., The Cock. Married at 3 clock in the Morning. Behav'd rudely.

Again, on a loose sheet :—

June 21st, 1740. John Jones, of Eaton Sutton in Bedfordshire, and Mary Steward of the same, came to Wood's in Fleet Lane about six o'clock in the morning. Mr. Ashwell and self had been down the markett. Wood called him and I went with him ; there found the said man and wooman ; offer'd Mr. Ashwell 3 shilling to marry him ; he would not, so he swore very much and would have knocked him down but for me ; was not married. Took this memorandum that they might not Pretend afterwards they was married and not Register'd.

'Oct. 30, 1744. James Drummond, Waterman, of St. Margt's Westminster, and Ann Gillingbra, B. and Widow, at Oddy's. Abusive people.' In the same month it is recorded of a couple that they gave 'nothing. Clrk went away and did not pay for the liquor.' On a loose leaf in a pocket-book bearing date 1744 is written this memorandum :—

Come some people to the Green Canister to be married. Would Give the min'r. but 7*s*. and he would do : went away Half married. Took this Account Because they should not Come and say thay was married and not Registered.—Nov. 22, 1744. Came a man and Wooman to be married, but would not Pay the Clrk nor Register. Said he was a Furrier or Hatter.—Sunday, August 12, 1744. Came to the Green Cannister and hand pen at fleet ditch a Gentleman Like man to be married, but would give but five shill. Mr. Ashwell would have 10 shill. ; went away half married.

May 13, 1744. Christopher Clinch, of St. Marg't., Westminster, Cordwainer, B., and Mary Clary of Aldgate. Att Mrs. Levy's, Green Cannister, her mother, a very notorious woman, and raised a very great Mobb about the house and swore Mr. Ashwell had robed (*sic*) (them) of thare ring because he would not marry them for half a Crown.

Of another couple the writer records that they had 'a very

abusive young fellow with them.' The following memorandum is dated October 6, 1747 :—

Came some Rude People to be married ; left 5*s.* 6*d.* Went to fetch more money but Came no more. Took this account because they should not Come again hereafter and say that they was married as was nott.

29 June, 1744. James Mccar, of St. George's the East, marriner, Br. and Elizabeth Donaldson, Ditto, Sp. These People would not pay any more ; the man said he had not rec'd his wages or would have paid any thing.

In the month of May 1745 a man named Harrison was married at a brandy shop in the Fleet, and how he and his friends comported themselves on that occasion may be gathered from the subjoined transcript from a memorandum book :—

This Harrison and his company was Wicked and Abusive People. Would not Pay for the pint of Wine and swore they would murder the minister wherever they mett him or I. To pay 5*s.* 0*d.* wine, 5*s.* 0*d.* clrk, 10*s.* 2*d.* cert.

So far we have not met with any instances of the common practice of antedating the certificates to accommodate the wishes of those who had married without the consent of their parents or friends. An instance of this occurs in a paragraph of the 'Weekly Journal,' February 13, 1717 :—

John Moltram, Clerk, was tryed for solemnising clandestine and unlawful marriages in the Fleet Prison, and of keeping fraudulent Registers, whereby it appear'd that he had dated several marriages several years before he enter'd into orders, and that he kept no less than nine several registers at different places which contained many scandalous frauds.

Now for an instance of this from a register :—

1728. These wicked people came this day. Peter Oliver, of St. Olaves, carpenter, and Elizabeth Overton, B. and W. Would have a certificate dated in 1729, or would not be married if it was to be dated to this time ; went to Lilley's and was married.

Again,—

1729, June 10. John Nelson, of ye Pa. of St. George's, Hanover, Batchelor and Gardner, and Mary Barns, of the same, Sp., married. Jno. Floud, Min'ter. Dated 5 November in 1727 to please their Parents—at Wheeler's, and J. F. Min'r.

Again,—

October 17, 1744. Made his mother believe he was married. Oct. 29, copy.

Again,—

November 5, 1742, was married Benjamin Richards, of the parish of St. Martin's in the Fields, Br., and Judith Lance, do., Sp., at the Bull and Garter, and gave g. for antidate to March ye 11th in the same year, which Lilly comply'd with and put 'em in his book accordingly, there being a vacancy in the Book sutable to the time.

20 May, 1737. Jno. Smith, Gent., of St. James, Westminster, Bachr. and Eliz. Huthall of St. Giles, Spr., at Wilson's. By ye opinion after matrimony my Clark judg'd they were both women ; if ye person by name John Smith be a man, he's a little short fair thin man, not above 5 foot. 1735, June 5. Dennis and Ann. Done at the Mitre at Brentford ; would give no sirnames. Pr. J. Gaynam.

Parson Gaynam, it may be mentioned, performed marriages at the Fleet from about 1709 until 1740, and was nicknamed 'Bishop of Hell.'

The following list contains the names of the chief 'persons of quality,' who were married in the Rules of the Fleet during the first half of the eighteenth century :—

On May 3, 1744, the Hon. Henry Fox, second son of Sir Stephen Fox, was united by a Fleet parson to Georgiana Caroline Lennox, eldest daughter of Charles, second Duke of Richmond. May 6, 1724, Right Hon. Edward Lord Abergavenny and Catherine Tallon. Dec. 26, 1744, Sir John Bloy and Anne Moore. Jan. 20, 1729, the Hon. John Bourke, afterwards John eighth Viscount Mayo, and Catherine Hamilton. Aug. 5, 1740, the Hon. John Graydon and Kasandra Tahourdin. Nov. 27, 1724, Sir Marmaduke Gresham and Anne Hoskyns. Nov. 20, 1715, Wm. Johnston, Lord Marquess of Annandale, and Charlotta Vanlore Vanden Bempden. Aug. 5, 1720, William Wilmer and the Right Hon. Lady Mary Benet. March 3, 1720, William Peirs, Esq., M.P. for Wells, and Mary Ives, St. Martin's Fields. Sept. 25, 1718, William Phipps, Esq., Holborn, and Lady Catherine Annesley, Stoke Poges, Bucks, B. and S.

April 3, 1735, Right Hon. Robert Lord Montagu, Grosv. Square, and Miss Har't. Dunch, St. Mart. Fields, B. and S.

July 19, 1740, Hon. Capt. Fras. Martin and Mary Bruce.

How many 'ministers' performed marriages it is impossible to say. Mr. Burn's volume contains the names of fifty-three unknown to fifteen known, and the names of thirty-eight tavern-keepers who combined the sale of spirituous liquors with the discharge of clerkly duties. The names of the tavern keepers, and of the signs by which their establishments were known, recur constantly in the pocket-books.—'Wood's,' 'Wheeler's at Elephant and Castle,' 'ye Winecellar, Blackfryars,' 'Sawyer's,' 'ye White Horse Inn,' 'Lilly's,' 'ye Anchor and Crown,' 'ye Sun Coffee House,' 'ye Sheppeard and Goat near Fleet Bridge,' 'ye Wheatsheaf'—being some of the chief 'temples' wherein the Fleet marriages were solemnised.

We have now to examine the greatest curiosity of all these registers. It is volume 50, a register which was evidently the property either of a parson or of a tavernkeeper, who had from some source or another acquired a knowledge of the Greek alphabet, and who by this means was enabled to jot down certain particulars respecting the marriages that he performed in a manner which should be intelligible only to himself. It is hardly necessary to say that this volume (which dates from 1727 to 1754) is in a very dismantled condition, and like all the others contains a large number of blank leaves and an index somewhat carefully compiled. The first entry in which the Greek characters are employed occurs under date of March 11, 1727, and runs to the following effect :—

| DATE. | TRANSLATION. | NAME. |
|---|---|---|
| 11th. φαιδ fop τhη μαρριαγη τhρηη shιλλινγs ανδ for χηρτιfιχατη ονε shιλλινγ. | paid for the marriage three shillings and for certificate one shilling. | Richard Fere, Butcher & Soldier, Ann Gambol, both of St. Sepulchre's Lond. Batchelor and Ww., pr. John Floud. |
| January 2d, 1728. μαρρ, Eιγhτ shιλλινγs ονε χλhρκ & ονη Δο χηρτιfι —They ωηρη μαρριηδ ατ μρs Eχολs. | marriage, eight shillings, one clerk, and one do. certificate. They were married at Mrs. Eccles'. | Thomas Bedford, Tile Maker, of Eling in ye County of Missx, & Jane Shroud, of Deptford of Kent, B. & W., p. J. Floud. |

| DATE. | TRANSLATION. | NAME. |
|---|---|---|
| 7th. | | |
| μαρρ Σηυηντηηη shιλ-λινγs & sιχ φηνχη. Τωο & sιχφηνχ χληρχ δο χηρτιf. μαρριηδ ατ Τομ Rουνδs. | marriage seventeen shillings & sixpence. Two and sixpence clerk. Do. certif. Married at Tom Round's. | Edmund Wallis, Coach-painter, & Lydia Ward, both of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, B. & Sp., pr. Jno. Floud. |
| 8th. | | |
| μαρρ Thρτη shιλλινγ & ονη χληρχ & τhρη δο χηρτιf. | marriage thirteen shillings & one to clerk, and three ditto certificate. | John Watts. of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, Baker, & Ann Lane, of St. Martin's in the fields, B. & Sp., pr. Wagstaff. |
| 13th. | | |
| μαρρ Thρηη shιλλινγs & ονη δο χηρτιfη Thε βριδεγροομ ωας Thη bροτhηρ of Thη μημορ-αβλη Ιοναθαν Wιλδ Εxηχυτηδ ατ Tyβυρν. | marriage three shillings & one do. certif. The bridegroom was the brother of the memorable Jonathan Wild, executed at Tyburn. | Andrew Wild, a Whitesmith of St. Sepulchre's, and Mary Harold of do., Wr. & Ww., p. Jno. Floud. |
| 19th. | | |
| μαρριηδ ατ βαλλs I hαδ α shιλλινγ fορ sτανδινγ χληρχ. | married at Ball's, I had a shilling for standing clerk. | Joseph Harrison, Marriner, & Katherine Green. both of St. Giles's in the fields, Wr. & Ww., p. J. W. |
| March 8th, 1728. | | |
| Νοτhινγ βυτ α νοτη of hανδ fορ Thιs μαρριαγη ωhιχh νηυηρ ωας φαιδ. | Nothing but a note of hand for this marriage, which never was paid. | William Corps, of St. James's Clerkenwell, Coach-maker, & Elizabeth Scott, of the Temple, B. & Ww., p. Jno. Floud. |
| 11th March, 1728. | | |
| μαρρ, fιυη shιλλινγs ονη δο χλαρχ & Τωο & Sιx φηνχ χηρτιf βρουγhτ βγ μρs Thομφσον Vιδ Νου-ημβηρ 30th, 1727. | marriage, five shillings and one do. clark, and two and sixpence certificate, brought by Mrs. Thompson, Wid., November 30th, 1727. | Francis Spencer, Soldier, & Elizabeth Cannon, both of St. Martin's in the fields, B. & Sp., pr. Jno. Floud. |
| June 26th, 1728. | | |
| μαρριηδ ατ α βοx μαχηρs ιν α χουρτ. | married at a box maker's in a court. | Benjamin Rider, a Waggoner, & Sarah Moss, both of Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, B. & S., P. J. W. |
| July 22, 1728. | | |
| βρουγhτ βγ μρ Rορfερ Hαrιsονη of Thη ⊣ ωho γαυη μη τωο γινέαs το φρουιδη α hυsβανδ fορ μαδαμ & δηfραy αλλ τhη συβjογνηδ shαρηs of τhη ωηδδινγ, νιz., Δοχτηρ 7s. & το βριδηγροομ 6s. οd. Thη Rεsτ το μησηλf fορ α fυρτhηρ Αχχο of μρ Wηλsh. | brought by Mr. Robert Harrison of the —, who gave me two guineas to provide a husband for madam and defray all the subjoined shares of the wedding, viz., Doctor 7s. & to bridegroom 6s. od. the rest to myself for a further account of Mr. Welsh. | Josiah Welsh, a Cordwainer, & Elizabeth Cutchey, of St. Giles's, Cambridge, W. & Sp., pr. Jno. Floud. |

| DATE. | TRANSLATION. | NAME. |
|---|---|---|
| August 27th, 1728. | | |
| *μαρριαγη Τηιρτηην shιλ-λινγς & ονη & sιxφηνχη χηρτιfιχατη. Τηη Wo-μαν νοτ χαρινγ το 6η μαρριηδ ιν Τηε φλεετ I hαδ Τηημ μαρριηδ ατ μρ Bρoωνς ατ μρ hαρρισονς ιν φριδγηονη χουρτ ιν Τηη Oλδ Βαιληγ ατ fουρ α χλoχχ ιν Τηη μορνινγ.* | marriage thirteen shillings and one and sixpence certificate. The woman not caring to be married in the Fleet I had them married at Mr. Brown's, at Mr. Harrison's in — Court in the Old Bailey, at four o'clock in the morning. | Christopher Owen, a Smith of St. Martin's in the Fields, & Susannah Dains, of St. Giles's in the fields, B. & Sp., pr. Jno. Floud. |
| Sept. 22, 1728. | | |
| *Τhιs ωηδδινγ ωας 6ρηoκν of. Τhε Δoχτηρ hαδ fιvη shιλλινγs χλαρχ — & τηην & sιχφηνχη χηρτιf.* | This wedding was broken off. The Doctor had five shillings, clark —, and ten and sixpence certif. | Joseph Child, Gent., & Mary Tape, both of St. Martin's in the fields, Wr. & Ww., per J. W. |
| Aug. 12, 1729. | | |
| *φδ fιvη shιλλινγs φηρ τoταλ. N.B. Τηη 28τh of Αφριλλ 1736 μρs βηλλ χαμη ανδ Εαρ-νεστλγ ιντρεατηδ μη το Ερασε Τηη μαρριαγη ουτ oι Τηη βooχ fορ Τhατ hηρ hυs6ανδ hαδ 6ηατ ανδ αβυsηδ hηρ ιν α 6αρ-6αρους μαnνηρ & sηη hαδ μυχh ραθηρ 6η Es-τηημηδ hιs — Τhατ sηη μïγhτ hαυε α φρoφηρ Rη-χουρsε ατ λαω αγαινsτ hιμ. I μαδη hηρ 6ελειυη I διδ so, fορ ωhιχh I hαδ hαλf α γυινεα ανδ sηη ατ τηη sαμε τιμε δηλιυηρηδ μη υφ hηρ χηρτιfιχατη. Νο φηρsον φρηsηντ αχ-χορδινγ το hηρ δηsιρε.* | Paid five shillings, fair total. N.B. The 28th of April, 1736, Mrs. Bell came and earnestly entreated me to erase the marriage out of the book, for that her husband had beat and abused her in a barbarous manner, and she had much rather be esteemed his — that she might have a proper recourse at law against him. I made her believe I did so, for which I had half a guinea, and she at the same time delivered me up her certificate. No person present according to her desire. | Abraham Wells, a Butcher of the p'sh of Tottenham in M'd'ex & Susannah Hewitt, of Enfield, Wr, & Ww. pr. Jno. Floud. |
| 29 August, 1729. | | |
| — | Marriage five shillings, and two do. certificate. Two most notorious thieves. | John Walls, Distiller, of St. Dunstan's in the East, and Mary Mackarty, of St. Andrew's, Holborn, W. & Wo., pr. Jno. Floud. |
| 16 Dec., 1729. | | |
| — | Marriage, viz. per an old licence one guinea and a half, the wedding half a guinea, and certif. five shillings, performed at the Sun Tavern in Holborn. | George Stewart, Gent., and Mary Hill, both of St. Dunstan's in the West, B. & Ww. Pr. Jno. Floud. |

| DATE. | TRANSLATION. | NAME. |
|---|---|---|
| Nov. 12th, 1729. — | This marriage upon honour did the 30th of November, 1727. | John Slater, Gent., of St. Andrew's, Holborne, and Frances Thompson, of St. Dunstan's in the West, B. & Sp., pr. Jno. Floud. |
| May 28th, 1730. — | Married at the Globe Tavern, Hatton Garden; myself had five shillings as clark, and gave a certificate on stamped paper. (Handsomely Entertained.) | William Tew, Gent., & Katherine Skeere, both of St. Buttolph's (*sic*) Bishopsgate, B. & Sp., pr. Robert Cuthbert. |
| May 13th. — | Marr. ϵ χλαρχ four shillings. No certificate, this parson was blind. | Alexander Snape, a brazier, & Elizabeth Robinson, both of St. Sepulchre, B. & Sp. pr. Ralph Shadwell. |
| November 6, 1735. — | This couple had an old certificate antedated to the 24th of August, 1734, for which was to have had five shillings, but marr. seven and sixpence. These were brought by Mr. Wagner. | John Fletcher, a butcher of St. Clement Danes, & Hannah Neslor of St. Andrew's, Holborn, B. & Sr. |
| 27th April, 1736. — | Total six shillings, brought by a counsellor. | Cotton Bartlett, Apothecary, and Elizabeth Sharp, both of St. Bride's, B. & W., pr. W. Wyatt. |
| May 13th, 1734. μρ χομινγς γαινη μη haλf α γινηα το finδ α θριδεγροομ & δηίραy αλλ Exφννχης φαρσον Τωο & Sιxφηνχη hυsθανδ δο finηε & sιxφηνχ μysηλf. | Mr. Cummings gave me half a guinea to find a bridegroom and defray all expenses, parson two and sixpence, husband do., five and sixpence myself. | Samuel Stewart, a Chocolate maker, & May Nugent, both of St. M. Ludgate, B. & Sp. pr. Ralph Shadwell. |
| April 29th, 1734. — | Marr. ten shillings and sixpence, Clark two and sixpence, certif. two do. Spent ten shillings in Punch. | Joseph Harrison, a Groom, Ann Bolt, both of St. Mary Cray, in Kent, Br. & Sp., pr. J. Gaynam. |

It would be easy to quote more from this extraordinary register, but lack of space forbids. Quite enough has, however, been adduced fully to show what manner of men the Fleet parsons really were.

Although the Rules of the Fleet were visited by the larger number of applicants, there were other places for the solemnisation of clandestine marriages, these being four in number—the King's Bench Prison, situated in St. George's Fields, Lambeth; the Mint, a sort of sanctuary in Southwark; the Savoy; and Mayfair Chapel, situated in Curzon Street, Mayfair; which outshone them all and proved a formidable rival to the Fleet Prison, since it was there that the Rev. Alexander Keith, who had been originally a respectable parson, officiated, and, as Walpole says, 'constructed a very bishopric of revenue' by marrying on an average six thousand couples per annum. One of his advertisements which appeared in the 'Daily Post' of July 1744, was preserved by Burn. It runs to the following effect :—

To prevent mistakes the little new chapel in Mayfair, near Hyde Park Corner, is in the corner house opposite to the city side of the great chapel, and within ten yards of it, and the minister and clerk live in the same corner house where the little chapel is, and the license on a crown stamp, minister, and clerk's fees, together with the certificate, amount to one guinea as heretofore, at any hour till four in the afternoon. And that it may be better known, there is a porch at the door like a country church porch.[1]

By 1754 the cup of the iniquity of the Fleet parsons was full to overflowing. The sword of Damocles was dangling above their heads ready to fall whenever the signal should be given. Rumours from time to time reached the purlieus of the Fleet Prison, that Lord Bath and other influential statesmen were framing an act which threatened the very existence of such scandalous practices. A warning note had been sounded by Dr. Gally, one of the court chaplains, Rector of St. Giles's in the Fields, in his 'Considerations upon Clandestine Marriages.' Chief among those who had long seen the crying evil was Lord Hardwicke, who upon more than one

[1] *Hist. of Fleet Marr.* p. 143. The manuscript register of this marriage house has recently been printed by the Harleian Society.

occasion had adverted in strong terms to the woefully defective state of the law as it existed, when engaged upon cases which had originated in a clandestine matrimonial alliance. More than one appeal had been carried to the House of Lords relating to the validity of these marriages, and 'in certain instances the innocent offspring had been cut off from the succession, though their parents had been *bonâ fide* married, because such marriages had not been celebrated in a regular manner.' Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, states that the Marriage Bill was originally moved by the Earl of Bath, who while attending a Scotch cause had been struck with the hardship of a matrimonial case in which a man, after a marriage of thirty years, was claimed by another woman on a precontract. Both men and women of the most infamous characters had opportunities of ruining the greatest families in England through the facilities of marrying in the Fleet and other unlicensed places.[1] When the draft of this bill was submitted to Lord Hardwicke, his dissatisfaction with it was so great that he resolved personally to frame one, and when he had done so, introduced it into the House of Lords, which it passed despite the vigorous attacks of the Duke of Bedford. The promptitude with which this measure passed the House of Lords was not experienced in the Lower House, where the opposition which was offered to it was considerable. It received the support of Henry Pelham, of the attorney and solicitor-general, and of Lord Barrington, but Henry Fox initiated a furious onslaught upon it, and Nugent and Charles Townshend followed on the same side.

Orators lavished their flowers of rhetoric and wit upon prophecies that the bill would check population and reduce England to a third-rate power, and that fine ladies would never consent to be asked for three Sundays running in the parish church. Charles Townshend delighted the House, never very critical of a new argument, by a pathetic appeal on behalf of younger sons, whom Lord Hardwicke's bill would debar from running away with heiresses. 'Were fresh shackles,' he asked, 'to be forged in order that men of abilities might be prevented from rising to a level with their elder brothers.'[2]

[1] Harris, *Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke*, ii. 484–5.
[2] Trevelyan's *Fox*, p. 14.

'But Pelham,' as Horace Walpole said, 'without speaking one word for it, taught the house how to vote for it,' and the bill, having passed by a majority of one hundred and twenty-five to fifty-six, was sent up to the House of Peers, where, after certain amendments which the Commons had made in it had been accepted, it was presented for the assent of the reigning monarch, George II., which it is needless to say it soon received. The provisions of this Act were to come into force on March 26, 1754, rendering thereafter the solemnisation of matrimony by a priest in any place not a church or public chapel, without a licence or the publication of banns, null and void, and such clergy as solemnised them guilty of an act of felony, and punishable on conviction with transportation for fourteen years.

It is not in the least degree strange to find that outside the walls of Parliament this remarkable measure was stigmatised, by those who looked upon only one side of the shield, as 'an absurd, a cruel, a scandalous, and a wicked one;' or that Horace Walpole should have declared that in the bill, 'from beginning to end, only one view had predominated, that of pride and aristocracy.' With much truth has Lord Hardwicke's biographer observed that 'such is almost necessarily the result where a bad course, which was in full operation, has to be rooted out; but this as much as anything bears testimony to the reality of the existing evil and the expediency of an efficient remedy.'

The days of clandestine matrimony were now numbered, and the public made a prompt recognition of the fact, the consequence being that the parsons who ministered to the passion in the Fleet and elsewhere had now more work on their hands than they could conveniently perform. To what extent the public availed itself of their services is evinced by the fact that on March 25, 1754, the day preceding that upon which the provisions of the New Marriage Act came into operation, the records of no fewer than two hundred and seventeen marriages were entered into one Fleet register book alone.[1] The New Marriage Act of course pre-

[1] *Gent.'s Mag.* 1754, p. 141.

cluded the solemnisation of clandestine marriages in Mayfair chapel, but that the officiating clergy exerted their utmost efforts to make hay while the sun of prosperity shone is evident from the fact that sixty-one couples were united within it on the day before the provisions of the Act came into force This day witnessed the solemnisation of the last of the Fleet marriages. Clandestine matrimony, however, died very hard. In the Savoy the minister (father of the celebrated actor, Tate Wilkinson) and his curate continued to defy the law until 1756, when both were convicted and subsequently transported. Doubtless many availed themselves of that mode of evading the new law which is indicated in a communication from a Gravesend correspondent, inserted in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for the month of March 1760, relative to the elopement of a young man and woman with a considerable fortune from that town.

> After an ineffectual pursuit by her careful guardian (he says), news is at length arrived from the island of Guernsey, that they have been married there. Upon inquiry it appears that at Southampton there are vessels always ready for carrying on the trade of smuggling weddings, which for the price of five guineas transport contraband goods into the land of matrimony; and this trade, it seems, has been carried on for some time swimmingly, and without interruption.[1]

More than one attempt was made during the second half of the eighteenth century to repeal the Act of 1754, the first in 1765, the second in 1772, and the third in 1781, but all three failed of success. The grave defect which Lord Hardwicke's measure contained has been well pointed out by Sir George Trevelyan in his sketch of the early life of Charles James Fox :—

> The chancellor insisted that everybody, including Roman Catholics and dissenters, must either be married according to the ritual of the Establishment or not be married at all; whatever objections they might entertain to a service some passages of which cause even the most devout pair of church people to wince when it is read over to them.[2]

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[1] *Gent.'s Mag.* 1760, p. 30.
[2] *Early Life of C. J. Fox*, p. 14.

Sir William Blackstone, when commenting upon the statutes of the English realm, expressed his opinion on the Marriage Act, that while it prevented minors from contracting clandestine alliances, it was productive of evil to the community at large, in that it imposed a restraint upon the increase of the population, and was consequently detrimental to public morality.[1]

Gretna Green, situated in Dumfriesshire, near the mouth of the river Esk, nine miles north-west of Carlisle, was long a celebrated scene of clandestine matrimony. A shrewd, crafty blacksmith named Scott, who resided at the Rigg, a few miles from the village, was, it is said, the first to unite couples in the bands of Hymen about 1750, and he had several successors. Pennant, the antiquary, who visited the spot in 1772, wrote thus of it :—

> Here the young pair may be instantly united by a fisherman, a joiner, or a blacksmith, who marry from two guineas a job to a dram of whisky. But the price is generally adjusted by the information of the postillions from Carlisle, who are in the pay of one or other of the above worthies ; but even the drivers, in case of necessity, have been known to undertake the sacerdotal office. This place is distinguished from afar by a small plantation of groves, the Cyprian grove of the place, a sort of landmark for fugitive lovers. As I had a great desire to see the high priest, by stratagem I succeeded. He appeared in the form of a fisherman, a stout fellow in a blue coat, rolling round his solemn chops a quid of tobacco of no common size. One of our party was supposed to come to explore the coast. We questioned him about the price, which, after eyeing us attentively, he left to our honour.[2]

Pennant concludes his account with the remark that the Church of Scotland did what it could for the prevention of these clandestine marriages, but in vain, as the 'priests' treated the penalties of excommunication which were all that the Kirk had power to fulminate with the utmost contempt. One of the most notorious Gretna Green marriages was that which was solemnised in 1782, between Lord Westmoreland and the rich heiress of Child, an eminent London banker, when the fugitive pair being hotly pursued and nearly overtaken when within a

[1] *Commentaries*, i. 438.
[2] *Tour in Scotland*, ii. pp. 94-5.

few miles of the Border, his lordship produced a pistol, took deliberate aim, and shot the leading horse of the carriage in which Mr. Child was riding.

Before bringing this subject to an end it may be worth while to say that it is not generally known that in the early part of the eighteenth century the Gretna Green of the Midland counties was the parish church of Fledborough, a secluded village near Retford in Nottinghamshire, the rector of which rejoiced in the name of Sweetapple, a very obliging divine, who also acted as surrogate. The parish register of this church exhibits, according to Brown, the author of the 'Annals of Newark,' only three or four marriages at the beginning of his incumbency, and as many as forty-four per annum towards the end of it. Local tradition asserts that a nobleman was married at Fledborough under a false name, although the register contains no record whereby such a tradition can be substantiated. It is possible that similar spots existed in sequestered parts of the country where facilities were offered for the secret solemnisation of matrimony.

It is now high time to draw to a conclusion. From the vantage-ground of the nineteenth century we have gazed upon eighteenth-century manners and morals. We have perambulated the London of the first Georges. We have peeped into the world of fashion, have examined the wardrobes of our great-grandfathers and grandmothers, have gazed upon bewigged beaux and be-hooped belles, as they sat at the masquerade, the opera, and the play, as they attended the festino, the ridotto, and the drum, as they sat at the auction rooms and card-tables, or attended their duels. We have threaded the mazes of old Vauxhall and Ranelagh Gardens, chaperoned by Mr. Spectator, Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff, Sir Roger de Coverley, to say nothing of other agreeable company. We have taken coach, and in company with Defoe, Fielding, Young, and Moritz, have taken a general survey of rural England, have visited the abode of the squire, the parson, and the farmer, and have even inspected the cottage of the hind. We have reviewed the state of the contemporary literary, religious, and political worlds, have gleaned some information

respecting the Fleet parsons and marriages, and have briefly investigated the penal code. We have seen that, although the people of England in that age led simpler and less exciting lives, and enjoyed a far greater amount of individual liberty than their successors, they were none the happier: we have seen that, although the gallows was applied much more unhesitatingly than, happily, it now is, there was no diminution of crime; that, on the contrary, there was an increase of it; we have seen, in fine, that, although the eighteenth century is not marked out or placed in broad relief by any of those startling subversive movements or occurrences which give sometimes an elevating, sometimes a lurid grandeur to its predecessors, although it presents nothing like the desolating Wars of the Roses, or the ecclesiastical dissensions, and the great religious schism of the sixteenth century under Elizabeth, or the Great Rebellion, or the Revolution of 1688, it yet possesses a value and an interest by reason of its containing (and, to the discriminating inquirer, unfolding) the germs from which the England of 1700 has evolved, silently, almost imperceptibly, into the England of the nineteenth century; and we turn aside from the contemplation of it, wondering whether in the ages that are yet to come our grandchildren and their grandchildren will differ as much from ourselves as we evidently differ from our great-grandfathers, and whether the English nation will make, in the course of the centuries which may yet be in store for our planet, as much progress in the arts and refinements of life as it has manifestly succeeded in making during the last three generations.

Within a comparatively recent period it has become the fashion among a certain class of persons from whom better things might reasonably be expected, to laud and magnify the eighteenth century to ethereal regions. They have repeatedly assured the public from platforms and pulpits, and in the pages of magazines and reviews, that the social, the political, the religious, and the literary development of England was never in so active a state as it was then, and, consequently, never in a more fruitful condition, and that, taking everything into consideration, the last century may fairly be pronounced the seed-time of the present. When committed to print, these assertions, it must

be confessed, seem at first sight to wear a very plausible air, and yet they prove to be most hollow and misleading when they are made the subject of thoughtful consideration. If the eighteenth century really was, as alleged, the seed-time of the present age, it could have been so only in the sense of the time during which the seed lay in the bosom of the furrow while the surrounding elements were co-operating to elicit its energies. If the reader will only picture to himself the foul state of the moral and social atmosphere, which imperatively required such a terrific tornado as the great French Revolution to burst forth before its pestilential stagnation could be dispelled, he will be in a position to arrive at something approaching to a true estimate of that dark, savage, repulsive moribund age.

There is probably no one now living who does not congratulate himself that his lot was not cast in the eighteenth century. It has become by general consent an object for ridicule and sarcasm. Its very dress and airs had something about them which irresistibly moves a smile. Its literature—with some noble exceptions—stands neglected upon our shelves. Its poetry has lost all power to enkindle us; its science is exploded; its taste condemned; its ecclesiastical arrangements flung to the winds; its religious ideas outgrown and in rapid progress of a complete and perhaps hardly deserved extinction.[1]

Such was the calm, impartial judgment which was pronounced upon the eighteenth century by the Bampton Lecturer (Canon Curteis) before the University of Oxford in 1871, and probably few will be disposed to dissent from the opinion of one so competent to judge. It expresses aptly and forcibly the conclusions at which all who have made the age a subject of study do and must arrive. Advanced thinkers may declaim till the crack of doom on what they are pleased to term the glories of the eighteenth century, but they will never get rid of the broad fact that the age, in plain and unvarnished language, was one of foppery and weakness, stiletto and mask, and all that has been accomplished since it passed away in the matter of social and religious reform has barely sufficed to atone for the grievous harm to honour and morality which it is

[1] *Dissent in its Relation to the Church. Bampton Lectures*, 1871, vi. 291.

simply undeniable was inflicted upon the country during the time that it lasted.

In these volumes an attempt has been made (with what degree of success it must be left for the reader to determine) to illustrate the age by means of its social life, its manners and its customs. For every important statement that has been advanced, the original authority, where possible, has been cited, and all available sources of information have been laid under contribution. Yet after all that has been said and done, the subject has not by any means been exhausted. The chapters have consisted of but little else than shreds and patches, and have presented the appearance of tessellated pavements of various shapes and colours. The object has been simply to convey to the mind of the reader an accurate account of everyday life in England in the last century by weaving together a large number of characteristic details derived from all manner of sources which presented any points of marked analogy or contrast to the actual experiences of everyday life in this nineteenth century of ours. In days gone by the traveller was oftentimes afforded considerable relief, if he beguiled the toil and monotony of a long and tedious journey through an uninteresting country, by taking note of the stones placed at intervals by the wayside, which served as silent indicators of the distance he had travelled. Peradventure it may have been that for some who, though engrossed by the cares of this life, still occasionally pause for a while in order to take a hasty retrospect of the past social history of their native land, as with slow but certain step it has progressed through the vale of years, the rough-hewn milestones which have been erected in these pages may not have been altogether devoid of interest.

THE END.

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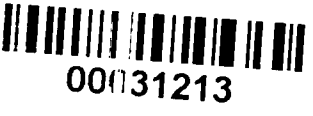
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